

SEALS AND THEIR CONTEXT IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Edited by Phillipp Schofield



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edited by

Phillipp R. Schofield



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Front cover: Armorial seal of Henry of Monmouth (d. 1345), younger brother of Thomas, earl of Lancaster, 1301 (The National Archive, E 26/2 A 60). This image was taken by The National Archives on behalf of the research project RANK (Prof. J. Peltzer), Heidelberg University, financed by The European Research Council under the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013)/ERC grant agreement no. 204905 (RANK).

Back cover: Matrix: possibly a brewer's seal (courtesy of National Museum of Wales).

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Introduction

Phillipp R. Schofield

The essays gathered in this collection were given at a conference held at Aberystwyth University and the National Library of Wales in April 2012. The conference was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council project, *Seals in Medieval Wales, 1200–1500* (hereafter SiMeW),¹ and coincided with the launch of an exhibition at the National Library of Wales of materials curated by the project team and the National Library (*Seals in Context: Medieval Wales and the Welsh Marches*).² The ambitions of the project team, as exemplified in the exhibition and associated work, were to examine in detail seals from Wales and the March for the high and late Middle Ages, both to shed new light on the politics, society and economy of medieval Wales and the March, but also to draw together a variety of approaches to the recording and examination of seals and to exemplify best practice in sigillographic research.

Detailed discussion of the research outcomes from the SiMeW project are reserved for the forthcoming volume issuing from the project. The project team were, though, committed to the examination of sigillographic material in terms of broad themes capable to shedding light on medieval society and, in this instance, Welsh and Marcher society in particular. Thus, such themes as family and lineage, power and politics, women and gender, religion and piety, were viewed through the prism of surviving seal impressions and their associated documents. The conference provided an excellent opportunity to present the project's research and its initial outputs, notably, at that stage, the exhibition and associated publication, to a wide audience and, in particular, an audience of specialist historians and sigillographers. In turn, the conference allowed current research in this, as yet fairly small but already certainly vibrant, area of medieval studies to be shared and for some of the possible avenues for further study to be explored. In a fairly recent collection

on medieval sigillography, researchers set out a series of important observations on the type and quality of seal, typically but not exclusively based upon institutions, be they spiritual, governmental or urban.³ In the present collection, authors were asked to consider as fully as possible the context in which seals were used; the SiMeW project team, as conference organisers, were keen to encourage research that moved beyond description and close analysis of the seal *per se* and to request that authors explored the variety of ways in which seals were employed, the mechanics of seal usage, and the placing of seal usage within the medieval world, themes as noted central to the conceptualisation of the SiMeW project.

Such an approach is very well represented in the papers collected in this volume. The volume is divided into three main sections which draw together papers on broadly comparable themes, namely status and power, law and practice, sources and context. As Elizabeth New's important contribution makes clear, the presiding historiographical emphasis on politics and elites has been mirrored in sigillographic studies where a relatively small proportion of seals, those especially of noble lords and great ecclesiastics, has until recently been the main object of study, while thousands upon thousands of smaller personal seals have, again until fairly recently, been offered very little attention.⁴ In not all respects is the present volume a significant departure from this trend and the papers gathered here do have a good deal to say about elites, their power and the nature of seal usage amongst those of higher status and/or major institutions, as represented through their seals and associated documents.

The first section of the volume tackles directly questions of status and of power, and has, as its inevitable and appropriate emphasis, a focus upon elites, and especially

kings and the nobility. While, as noted, this general feature is a familiar one in sigillographic study, the approach undertaken by the authors here offers significant and engaging departures, especially in the ways in which sigillography may elucidate the political ambition of medieval rulers. Nicholas Vincent's chapter on the court of Henry II offers a detailed and varied discussion of self-representation in the twelfth-century court. Commencing with the royal seals of Henry II, and especially the great seals (one of which, it is suggested, might conceivably be the Exchequer seal), Vincent examines the seals of officials within the court and government of Henry II, including the choices made by Henry's seal keepers in the motifs of their own seals. He also examines the ways in which Henry II may have constructed heraldic devices gleaned from Henry I and re-employed in his own privy seals. His officers and courtiers aped fashionable choices and also developed motifs of their own, including canting seals and humorous or cryptic devices and legends. Importantly, Vincent identifies a political agenda in the motifs used, most notably but not exclusively in the ways in which European kings sought, by the last quarter of the twelfth century, to represent their authority through heraldic devices which also found their way on to their seals. Daniel Power's discussion of the development of sealing practice in Normandy also has a good deal to say on the chronology of adoption of practice and he notes that, by the early thirteenth century, Norman sealing practice generally was developing in a manner consistent with that found elsewhere in neighbouring parts of western Europe. By examining the seals appended to the 1205 declaration on the Norman church, Power is able to set out the variety of seal types in association with the respective sigillants and to identify trends and fashions within this broadly elite socio-political group, in a manner that is at least suggestive of an increasingly sophisticated and complex system of seal designs but one that is not easily linked to social status and position. Instead, as Power argues here, we are offered through the declaration's seals, a snapshot of seal design and development, at a point when sigillants of essentially the same rank were prepared to experiment with design and to rely not only on more traditional common forms. Jörg Peltzer considers the extent to which fourteenth-century comital seals in England and Germany reflected, in their design, the rank of the sigillant and explores the ways in which subtle differences in design as well as in size allowed the general theme to be re-employed to denote relative rank. The size of seals was, as Peltzer notes, an important indicator of social status, the use of larger or smaller seals constrained by societal norms rather than by legislation. Size also mattered in the sense that the recalcitrant could use the size of their seal to challenge, symbolically at least, the authority of those deemed otherwise their superiors. Modification of equestrian seals also permitted individuals

to illustrate, through the designs, their ascent through the comital ranks; this included the adoption of lance and banner in motifs, a development which also lost favour as the actual distinctions in comital rank became more secure in the later fourteenth century. More particularly, the 'cap of estate' added to equestrian motifs was also used by Edward III to distinguish ducal lordships, mostly involving his direct line, from comital lordships. Not all papers in this first section deal with aristocratic power. John McEwan's examination of seal-makers in medieval London illustrates both the importance attached by seal users to the employment of skilled seal-makers but also the skills and discrete qualities of workmanship that served to distinguish seal-makers. As regards the first point, namely the use of high quality seal-makers by potential sigillants, McEwan's discussion chimes with observations earlier in this section (and elsewhere in the volume, as for instance in Markus Späth's discussion of Canterbury Cathedral seals) that seal owners and seal users often prized high quality work which, in its execution and its detail, allowed their individual motifs to be, in all senses, distinguished. Intriguingly, McEwan's discussion also reminds us – the second point here – that the unique and prized skills of quality seal-makers gave them their own level of distinction, even without an organised craft guild of their own. Seal-makers, as McEwan notes, added value to metals, even precious ones, through their work.

There is much in the chapters of the first section which crosses over into themes relevant to the second section of the volume, namely the practice of sealing, its associated bureaucracies and relevant law. In return, the chapters in this second section have much to say on the power contained within sealing practice and the legal and political authority located within medieval seals. In a contribution that stands also as a valuable introduction to the theme of sealing and medieval bureaucratic development, Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak considers the ways in which seals and sealing practice invaded medieval secular and religious thought in the twelfth and thirteenth century, the seal coming to stand for both the corporeal and the incorporeal. The seal's power and efficacy was examined by William of Auvergne (d. 1249) who denied that seals had intrinsic powers based upon nature but that their force and efficacy derived from conventional signs, i.e. their force was a symbol recognised by social and political convention. Bedos-Rezak wonders whether what she perceives as a retreat from total reliance on seals by the close of the thirteenth-century, with for instance a greater use of the signature, may reflect earlier theoretical uncertainties, as expressed by leading thinkers, and a lack of complete confidence in the power and authenticity of the seal. A century earlier, as Adrian Ailes describes in his chapter on governmental seals in the reign of Richard I, we find Richard redesigning his great seal during his reign, a second great seal reflecting dynastic and

contemporary politics and considered choices in heraldic devices reflective of the same. The same themes arise in John Cherry's discussion of Italian notarial and official seals, not least in the ways in which high-standing officers such as Giovanni da Vico, Prefect of Rome in the mid-fourteenth century, employed familiar concepts of justice as the *leitmotif* of city government within the motif of their seals of office. Importantly, in Cherry's discussion, is the distinction between the notarial enrolment proved by the *tabellion* or *signum* of the notary, an act which was not dependent upon the use of a seal. Cherry notes that distinctions in the use of notarised documents and seals varied both over time and within jurisdictions and considers also a diplomatic distinction that may have applied between private (notarised) and public (sealed) documents in later medieval Italy. Brian Kemp's examination of the thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century seals of the Longespée family also illustrates the ways in which a noble family could maintain both the symbolism of its name and the iconic 'consequences' of its family arms in seal design across a number of generations. Of significance here, family members, such as Nicholas of Longespée, who rose to become bishop of Salisbury in the later thirteenth century, or his mother, Ela, subsequently abbess of Lacock, did not chose to identify their familial symbols on seals of clerical office.

The hidden potential (both positive and negative) in seals, in terms of the memories they might invoke, is one feature contextualising seal usage; while serving to prove an immediate claim, seals could also reduce the ambitions of the sigillant by their representative association with images and memories, welcome and unwelcome (a theme that also emerges in Markus Späth's chapter in this volume and to which some return will be made below). In his chapter on governmental seals in the reign of Richard I, Adrian Ailes also provides strong evidence for the identification of Richard's exchequer seal, previously confused by some commentators with Richard's privy seal, and used by the chancellor William Longchamp as his seal of office during Richard's absence overseas *c.* 1190. Ailes also detects, in Richard's design choices in relation to his second great seal, a desire through the omission of certain motifs evident in the first great seal to distance himself from his discredited chancellor. Another threat to the force and general good of seals came through legal challenge, as Paul Brand discusses in his chapter. In litigation over contracts, parties might, as Brand shows, challenge the validity of a claim on the basis of, for instance, the condition of the seal or the method by which the seal had been attached to the document or the validity of the manner or context in which the seal had been attached. Cases in which plaintiffs argued that sigillants were pressurised into securing documents by seal or that third parties had used seals without the seal owner's consent or that sigillants had used forged seals speak also to

themes identified by Bedos-Rezak, as discussed earlier; they add to the suggestion that total confidence in the power and authority of the seal was challenged by the end of the thirteenth century, from which period much of the English case law cited here also dates.

In a third and final section of essays in this collection, seals are set in distinct contexts, be that in terms of their reuse as pictorial images in later documents, as in the discussion by Matthew Sillence and Sandy Heslop of a eighteenth-century plan of the city of Norwich, or in the ways in which location and architecture are refashioned symbolically through the medium of the seal, as discussed by Markus Späth. Sillence and Heslop illustrate the ways in which medieval seals could be re-employed in civic plans from the mid-eighteenth century, the post-medieval design reflecting contemporary views of the civic nature, its moral compass and the governance of the city. As in previous sections, we see again such themes as the (re-)representation of governance and office, noted, for instance, in seal design from fourteenth-century Italy (in John Cherry's chapter) and the persistence of authority, associated with the enduring force of office. The re-employment and repetition of motifs in later centuries provided an immediate device for reinforcing civic roles through association with their distant antecedents, in much the same way as did the long history of shared familial devices supported the transmission of familial identity from one generation to the next, as for instance described in the chapter by Brian Kemp. In this respect the survival of seals, as impressions and as matrices, allowed later uses to reflect upon the durability of their lineage, be that familial or official, its transmission over time conveyed through the relatively fragile device of the seal. Memorializing of a similar kind also sits at the heart of Späth's examination of the ways in which monastic houses, mostly drawn from English instances, used the motifs of their seals to remind the user and viewer of their 'glorious pasts'. Through his discussion of thirteenth-century common seals for English cathedral priories, and especially Canterbury and Ely, Späth shows the ways in which monastic communities at great cathedral priories created seal motifs that reflected not so much the local and immediate architecture of their actual church but a contemporary reflection on an idealised and universal church. Within this 'micro-architecture', and through the innovative use of double matrices, the monks were able to locate figures representative of the particular claims of the cathedral, such as the martyrdom of Becket at Canterbury. In such instances, as Späth makes clear, the essential history of the cathedral and the claims to spiritual authority of the monastic community were literally impressed within the represented structure of the church; in each act of sealing, the involved process would also serve to invoke the same essential claims.

Placing seals in a different context, David Williams, in

his chapter, deals not with impressions but with matrices and concentrates upon seal finds from medieval Wales. Adopting an approach that offers significant insight into the use and distribution of seals, Williams identifies certain trends both in the location and typology of medieval Welsh seal finds. Here we are offered a sense of the considerable opportunities which archaeology and such beneficial initiatives as the portable antiquities scheme (<http://finds.org.uk/>) can offer sigillography, a complementary study of matrices and of location of finds offering vital new perspectives on seal use, its range and aspects of its typicality. Returning to the essay by Elizabeth New, which was also mentioned earlier, we are offered a departure from a long-standing commitment to the study of higher status seals. New's aim is to remind us not only of the extent of lower status personal seals surviving from medieval England but also, and here with an emphasis on the greater concentration of such seals from the thirteenth century, to illustrate how apparently simple motifs were far more nuanced than has always been supposed. By examining radial motifs from two large databases of seals (SiMeW at Aberystwyth and the TNA database of seals from the Duchy of Lancaster), New argues that apparently conventional devices most certainly contained complexities, in terms of the detail of geometric design and/or the identified objects from which such designs were constructed, such as particular plants or religious imagery, to create sometimes subtle yet certainly powerful – to contemporary eyes – messages of faith, dynasty, or social aspiration.

This volume begins with a paper that is set outside of the main organising themes identified here but also speaks to each of them. Paul Harvey asks why seals announce themselves as such in their legend. The use of the form '*sigillum* x' seems, as he notes, redundant when located on the actual seal itself; this he explains in terms of Anglo-Saxon diplomatic, *sigillum* in this instance referring to *signum*: 'this is my sign' rather than 'this is my seal'. In the subsequent chronology of the terminology, and the disappearance and reappearance of the term *sigillum*, its meaning, as Harvey suggests, shifted from the act of signing the cross to the literal reference to the seal. Here, as with the discussion of sealing practice and law discussed by Paul Brand in this volume, we are offered another view of the ways in which sealing occurred as well as an insight into the changing context, both in terms of the diplomatic surrounding the sealing of documents and the behaviour of sigillants at

the very point of sealing. It is in that spirit of considered reflection and close contextualisation of this varied and potentially fruitful material that the present collection of essays has been gathered.

Notes

- 1 AHRC project code: AH/G010994/1. Principal investigator, Phillipp Schofield; co-investigator, Sue Johns; Senior Research Officer, Elizabeth New, and Research Officer, John McEwan.
- 2 For brief details, see <http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=5326> (accessed 5 June 2014) and for a selection of images gathered as part of the project: <http://seliau.llgc.org.uk/> (accessed 5 June 2014). An associated publication is J. McEwan *et al.*, *Seals in Context: medieval Wales and the Welsh Marches* (Aberystwyth, 2012), which is available on-line at <http://seliau.llgc.org.uk/>. A volume arising from the project, *Seals and Society. Medieval Wales and the Welsh Marches* (University of Wales Press) will be completed in 2014 and will be co-authored by the project team.
- 3 *Good Impressions. Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, eds N. Adams, J. Cherry and J. Robinson (London, 2008).
- 4 On this point, see especially P. D. A. Harvey, 'Personal seals in thirteenth-century England', in *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages. Essays Presented to John Taylor*, eds I. Wood and G. A. Loud (London, 1991), pp. 117–27; A. F. McGuiness, 'Non-armigerous seals and seal-usage in thirteenth-century England', in *Thirteenth-century England, V*, eds P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 165–77; also T. A. Heslop, 'Peasant seals', in *Medieval England*, ed. E. King (London, 1988), pp. 214–5; P. R. Schofield, 'Seals and the Peasant Economy in England and Marcher Wales, ca. 1300', in *Medieval Coins and Seals: Constructing identity, signifying power*, ed. S. Solway (Turnhout, forthcoming).

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PRS, November 2014

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This is a seal

P. D. A. Harvey

Why do the legends on so many medieval seals start with the word *sigillum*, the seal of so and so? It is obviously a seal – it could hardly be anything else. Why does it have to announce itself in this way? Indeed, many seals do not: papal bullae simply name the pope, imperial seals the emperor and, at another level, innumerable anonymous seals bear mottoes that make no mention of the seal itself. Yet many others do, from all parts of Europe, from all ranks of society: ‘The seal of Charles, son of the king of the Franks, count of Anjou’,¹ ‘The seal of Margaret de Ross, lady of the Isles’,² ‘The seal of the city of Stockholm in Sweden’,³ ‘The seal of Pedro de Itoiz’ (a merchant of Pamplona)⁴ are random examples. Sometimes, certainly, a reason appears; it is to be understood as the owner’s principal seal, the owner’s seal *par excellence*, as against others that are called *contrasigillum*, *sigillum privatum*, *sigillum ad causas* and so on. But these are exceptional; the vast majority of the seals that call themselves *sigillum* are simply the seal of the named sigillant.

In searching seal catalogues with this in mind, a broad pattern emerges. With few exceptions *sigillum* does not appear on the principal seals of sovereigns before the sixteenth century; it normally appears, however, on the seals of queens and other members of royal families, just as on the seals of nobles and lesser named seal-owners. Nearly all deputed royal seals call themselves *sigillum*, not only in defining their area of authority, as the seal of the exchequer or of a court of justice, but also where we might

expect more exact duplication of the principal seal’s form, as on the French kings’ seals of absence or the seal of Edward I as ruler of Scotland. The principal seals of bishops – their seals of dignity – normally start the legend with *sigillum*, but at least in France, England and Scotland there was a tendency from the mid-twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century to omit this and to give just the name and title.

Most interesting, however, is that *sigillum* does not appear on seals before the late eleventh century; apart from the seal of Fulk, to be discussed, the seals of the archbishop of Bourges in 1089 and of the bishop of Beauvais between 1089 and 1095 seem to be the earliest examples from France.⁵ The only exceptions to this are from England. Certainly, on the only known seal of an English king before Edward the Confessor, the lead bulla of Cenwulf, king of Mercia 796–821, the word *sigillum* does not appear,⁶ nor on the earliest of all known English seals, the late-seventh-century gold matrix of Baldehildis,⁷ but we see it on all the few other English seals believed to date from before the Norman Conquest.

In five cases we have the matrix:

Ethilwald, bishop of southern East Anglia, 845–70:

+SIG’EÐILVVALDI:EP⁸

Aelfric, late 10th or early 11th cent.:

+SIGILLVMELFRICI⁹

Godwin, minister, late 10th or early 11th cent.:

+SIGILLVMGODÐINIMINISTR¹⁰

Godgytha, nun, late 10th or early 11th cent. (engraved on handle of Godwin’s seal):

+SIGILLVMGODGYÐEMONACHED’ODATE

Wulfric, first half of 11th cent. (Schøyen):
+SIGILLVMÞVLFRICT¹¹

Others, that long continued in use, we know only from later impressions. The best known is the seal that Wilton Abbey used down to its dissolution in 1539; this was the personal seal of its early saint, Edith, who died in 984. Its legend reads:

+SIGILL'EADGYÐEREGAL'ADELPHE

She was the daughter of King Edgar and the sister (*adelphe*), correctly half-sister, of two kings, Edward the Martyr (975–78) and Aethelraed the Unready (978–1016). In an important article in 1980, T. A. Heslop argued convincingly that six other English religious bodies were using seals in the twelfth century and later that had been engraved at latest in the eleventh century and most likely before the Norman Conquest. Of one, from Glastonbury Abbey, we have only a fragment of the legend, but on all the other five we can see that the legend began with a cross and the word *sigillum*. These seals were from Exeter, Sherborne, Athelney and the cathedral priories at Canterbury and Durham.¹²

Until the late eleventh century, then, it seems that it was a peculiarity of English seals to start the legend with *sigillum*. What did the word mean in Anglo-Saxon England? The word is a diminutive of *signum*, which can mean a sign or token. This is exactly how *signum* is used on our three earliest seals of queens of France, the gold signet rings of Arnegundis (died 573), Radegundis (died 587) and Berthilda (who married Dagobert I in about 635); each is engraved with the queen's name and a monogram reading 'REGINE SIGNUM' (with variants).¹³ These seals may well have been used to authenticate documents; early royal charters from France were authenticated by the monarch's seal attached en placard. However, we know of no English sealed documents earlier than charters of Edward the Confessor and earlier seals were probably used to give authority to someone sent on the sigillant's business; they authenticated the messenger rather than a written message.¹⁴ What authenticated a formal document was not a seal but the persons testifying to its import, in a list normally at the end of the text. Before each name was a cross that the charter called the *signum crucis* or, simply, *signum*.

Even as late as 1095–97 we have a royal writ in this form, though further strengthened with the pendent seal that was by now the normal means of authentication.¹⁵ On some late examples the crosses appear to be autographs, actually drawn on the document by the persons named. Earlier, the crosses were normally drawn in uniform style by the writer of the document. In either case, however, we may be reasonably sure that authentication did not consist solely in writing the name and drawing the cross, the *signum*; each signatory will have strengthened the confirmation by making the sign of the cross, which is what the *signum* recorded. In most original charters that survive from the years 939–57 the sentence that names each witness not only opens with a large cross, but has a small cross interlineated above the reference to the sign of the cross, very often called not *signum crucis* but *sigillum crucis*;¹⁶ we can only guess what this may have implied in the ceremonial of attesting the charter.

It is against this background that we should see the word *sigillum* on early English seals. The *sigillum* is not the seal itself, but the small cross at the start of the legend;¹⁷ it was this that was the authentication, the *sigillum crucis* of the seal's owner, and we may well suppose that the sign of the cross was made over it every time it was brought into service.¹⁸ It is in this sense that we should understand the word *sigillum* on all seals before the Norman Conquest of 1066, the seal of Edward the Confessor among them. Oddly, this is borne out by certainly one, and very likely the other, of the two earliest Anglo-Saxon seals that, we have seen, are the only ones that do not have *sigillum* in their legend. That on the lead bulla of Cenwulf, king of Mercia, reads:

obverse + COENVVLF REGIS
reverse + MERCIORUM

The king's name and title are not in the nominative case but in the genitive: it is the cross 'of Cenwulf king of the Mercians'.¹⁹ The word *sigillum* does not appear – perhaps would never have appeared at this date – but is to be understood. The cross of King Cenwulf is what the seal is all about. Our other seal without *sigillum* may be an exact parallel. Its legend is simply:

+ BALDE HILDIS

Although here there is room for some doubt, this too may be read as a genitive: the cross 'of Baldehild'.²⁰

One question that arises is the parallel with contemporary English coins. It has been generally accepted that in the early Middle Ages there was a close link between the designs of seals and of coins, in England and elsewhere, though this has never been seriously investigated. Certainly most of our Anglo-Saxon seals look very like contemporary English pennies; there too a cross appears at the start of the wording around the edge, at first occasionally on coins of Offa of Mercia (757–96), then increasingly until by the ninth century it was a normal part of the design. We might reasonably suppose that the cross on the seal was simply taken over from the design of the coin. However, the words of Stuart Rigold are of interest here; he was a scholar whose interests covered both coins and seals and speaking of these seals in a published lecture some 40 years ago he wrote:

‘All have been, justly, compared with coin-types and, quite unjustly, regarded as isolated designs derived from existing coins. All positive evidence, throughout history, points in the opposite way, to wit, that the seal-type has the priority and the coin-type is derivative.’²¹

Thus, he would see the cross on the coins as coming from contemporary seals, not the other way round. Chronologically this is acceptable; the seals of Cenwulf and Ethilwald are a generation or so later than the pennies of Offa, but the seal of Baldehild is considerably earlier and we should anyway remember that the number of coins struck will have been infinitely greater than the number of seals engraved and that this will be reflected in their survival. Logically it makes sense for the cross on the seal to precede the cross on the coin: if the coin is based on the seal the cross will carry across from the seal its guarantee of authenticity, whereas otherwise there would be no particular reason to put a cross at the top of the coin.

It is not suggested that *sigillum* was never understood as seal in Anglo-Saxon England; it clearly could have this meaning. The seven seals that closed the book in the Vulgate’s translation of the Revelation are *sigilla*,²² and in his glossary Aelfric gives *inseġel*, which unquestionably meant seal, as the English translation of *sigillum* or *bulla*.²³ The word was ambiguous and Jane Roberts has recently shown how we see this ambiguity at work in the Old English translation of Felix’s account of Guthlac of Crowland.²⁴ This is an early-tenth-century text

that we know only from a late-eleventh-century version that has undergone some revision, and we may wonder whether in late-Anglo-Saxon England seal was being seen more and more as the primary meaning of *sigillum* – a process that its appearance on seals will have furthered. Certainly the few occurrences of *sigillum* in Domesday Book are unequivocal; to the Norman clerks who were its authors the word meant either a sealed document or, probably, the seal that a messenger carried to authenticate his message.²⁵ However, it is in the context of English diplomatic of the ninth and tenth centuries that *sigillum* first appeared on seals, and in this context it is unambiguously the cross at the start of the legend, not the seal itself.

If we accept that the word *sigillum* on seals originated in England and in Anglo-Saxon diplomatic we still have questions to answer. The word’s appearance in continental seal legends follows a pattern that can be easily defined, but the appearance of a cross at the start of the legend does not; we find it in continental seal legends long before we find the word *sigillum*, but inconsistently, and its incidence would probably repay investigation.²⁶ Another question is how and why did *sigillum* cross the Channel to become common on seal legends throughout western Europe? Alongside this we may place another, older, question: how did the two-faced pendent seal, which originated in the court of Edward the Confessor, come to be adopted in other countries? It seems as if, unexpectedly and for reasons that are obscure, mid-eleventh-century English usage had a strong influence on Continental seals. In our present state of knowledge neither question can be answered, but in the case of the word *sigillum* we have what may be just a glimmering of the process of transmission. In January 1843 a matrix was found ‘dans le canal à Amiens’; carved in ivory it was on one side the seal of Fulco, archdeacon, on the other the seal of Fulco, bishop, presumably reflecting the career of its single owner. This matrix has long disappeared, but it is known through plaster impressions. Most remarkable is that in form and lettering it is at one with the seals assigned to Anglo-Saxon England – and the legend on each side begins with a cross and the word *sigillum*. Fulco has been assumed to be bishop of Amiens and there were indeed two of this name at an appropriate period: one held office from 993

to 1030, the other from 1036 to 1058.²⁷ This, however, rests only on the slender evidence of the find-spot. Beauvais is not far away, and it could as well have belonged to Fulco de Dammartin who, we have seen, was bishop there from 1089 to 1095 and whose known seal is among the earliest outside England to bear the word *sigillum*. Venturing still further into speculation we may suppose that he first, as archdeacon, had a seal in wholly English style and had a similar seal carved on the back when he became bishop, soon replacing this, however, with a more conventional bishop's seal – it shows him standing and giving a benediction – into which he introduced the cross and the word *sigillum* from his earlier seal.²⁸ This will have done no more than record the sign of the cross that would be made when the seal was used, probably in France as in England. We may speculate even a little further. Could the omission of *sigillum* from so many bishops' seals between the mid-twelfth century and the mid-thirteenth reflect changing usage? – it was left off because it was no longer the custom to make the sign of the cross over every transaction and reinstated a century later when the word signified nothing more than the seal itself.

This is guesswork that further research may confirm or reject. It seems reasonably certain, though that the word *sigillum* in a seal's legend first appeared in England in or before the ninth century, referring not to the seal itself but to the cross at the start of the legend. It appeared on seals on the Continent from the late eleventh century and before long became a normal part of the legend, meaning now not the cross – though that was still there – but the seal itself.

Notes

- 1 M.-A. Nielen, *Les sceaux des reines et des enfants de France*, Corpus des sceaux français du Moyen Âge 3 (Paris, 2011), p. 164.
- 2 W. de Gray Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 6v., 1887–1900), iv, p. 272.
- 3 C. Neveus *et al.*, *Medeltida småkonst: Sigill i Riksarkivet*, Skrifter utgivna av Riksarkivet 19 (Stockholm, 1997), p. 23.
- 4 F. Menéndez Pidal de Navascués *et al.*, *Sellos medievales de Navarra: Estudio y corpus descriptivo* (Pamplona, 1995), p. 494.

- 5 [L. C.] Douët d'Arcq, *Archives de l'empire: inventaires et documents. Collection de sceaux* (Paris, 3v., 1863–8), ii, pp. 457 (no. 6298), 491 (no. 6506).
- 6 Birch, *Catalogue of Seals*, i, p. 1.
- 7 E. Okasha, 'The third supplement to *Hand-list of Anglo-Saxon non-Runic inscriptions*', *Anglo-Saxon England* 33 (2004), pp. 225–81, here pp. 244–5 (no. 232), pl. xia.
- 8 A. B. Tonnochy, *Catalogue of British Seal-dies in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1952), p. 1.
- 9 Tonnochy, *Catalogue of British Seal-dies*, pp. 2–3.
- 10 Tonnochy, *Catalogue of British Seal-dies*, pp. 1–2.
- 11 R. Linenthal and W. Noel, *Medieval Seal Matrices in the Schøyen Collection*, Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection 4 (Oslo, 2004), pp. 3–4, pl. xx.
- 12 T. A. Heslop, 'English seals from the mid ninth century to 1100', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 133 (1980), pp. 1–16, ps i–iv, here pp. 7–8, pls I, iv.
- 13 Nielen, *Les sceaux des reines*, pp. 57–9.
- 14 P. D. A. Harvey and A. McGuinness, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (London, 1996), pp. 3–5.
- 15 T. A. M. Bishop and P. Chaplais (eds), *Facsimiles of English Royal Writs to A.D. 1100 Presented to Vivian Hunter Galbraith*. (Oxford, 1957), pl. xix.
- 16 S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready' 978–1016: a Study in their Use as Historical Evidence*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 24; and see the charters reproduced in E. A. Bond, *Facsimiles of Ancient Charters in the British Museum* (London, 4v., 1873–8), iii, AD 939–66.
- 17 This conclusion is all but anticipated by Henry Ellis, 'Observations on the history and use of seals in England', *Archaeologia* 18 (1817), pp. 12–20, here p. 18. I am grateful to Miss E. A. Danbury for telling me of this article.
- 18 D. F. Johnson, 'The *crux usualis* as apotropaic weapon in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. C. E. Karkov *et al.* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 80–95, discusses the importance and power of the sign of the cross in Anglo-Saxon England.
- 19 Birch, *Catalogue of Seals*, i, p. 1.
- 20 Okasha, 'The third supplement', pp. 244–5 (no. 232), pl. xia.
- 21 S. E. Rigold, 'Seals and titles', *British Numismatic Journal*, 44 (1974), pp. 99–106, here pp. 99–100.
- 22 Revelation 5.1; 6.1–12; 8.1; but they are *signacula* in Revelation 5.2, 9. In other passages where the Authorised Version has the noun *seal* the Vulgate has *signum* (Jeremiah 32.44; Romans 4.11; Revelation 7.2) or *signaculum* (Job 38.14; Song of Solomon 8.6; Romans 4.11; 1 Corinthians 9.2; 2 Timothy 2.19).

- 23 T. Wright, *Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies*, 2nd edn, ed. R. P. Wülcker (London, 2v., 1884), i, col. 126.
- 24 J. Roberts, 'Guthlac of Crowland and the seals of the Cross', in *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. C. E. Karkov *et al.* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 113–28, especially pp. 115–23.
- 25 Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide*, p. 4. The references are all in volume 1, the Large Domesday; thus '*De hoc habent canonici sigillum regis Edwardi et regis Willelmi*' (f. 374) clearly refers to sealed documents, the testimony of '*ipse qui sigillum regis detulit*' (f. 169) probably to authentication of the messenger.
- 26 See, for instance, M. Dalas, *Les sceaux des rois et de régence*, Corpus des sceaux français du Moyen Âge 2 (Paris, 1991), pp. 80–127.
- 27 G. Demay, *Inventaire des sceaux de la Picardie* (Paris, 1875), pp. 117 (no. 1057), 130 (no. 1161); R. Rodière, 'Catalogue des sceaux-matrices des musées d'Amiens et d'Abbeville et de quelques collections picardes', *Bulletin de la Société des antiquaires de Picardie* 38 (1939–40), pp. 183–215, here pp. 186–7 (no. 13); Heslop, 'English seals', pp. 8–9, pl. ivd.
- 28 Douët d'Arcq, *Collection de sceaux*, ii, p. 491 (no. 6506).

The seals of King Henry II and his court*

Nicholas Vincent

The court of Henry II was a self-consciously peculiar place. Its apologists proclaimed its majesty even though its critics observed only boastfulness and an empty pretence to antiquity. Serving a monarch elsewhere derided as a usurping parvenu, its ethos was shaped by self-doubt.¹ To a degree unusual even in a highly self-conscious age, this was a court to which both history and symbolism mattered. The sheer number of chroniclers and literary figures in Henry II's orbit dwarfs anything seen in western Europe since the time of Charlemagne, more than three hundred years before. As a result, just as the coinage and sigillography of Charlemagne offer crucial insights into the self-presentation of the early Carolingians, so the seals of Henry II and his courtiers have an important role to play in our understanding of the fears and the pretensions of early Plantagenet kingship.

Seals were amongst the most public means of image projection. It is therefore no coincidence that the contemporary witnesses to Henry's court dwell upon their significance. The chronicle of Battle Abbey has a famous story of Richard de Lucy, Henry's first justiciar, ridiculing the pretensions of 'every mere knightlet' (*quemlibet militulum*) to the possession of seals, previously (according to the chronicler's, by no means entirely reliable report) an attribute reserved to kings and other great men (*regibus et precipuis ... personis*).² Walter Map, another court reporter, recounts the efforts of a counterfeiter to make an impression of the royal seal in pitch and

thereafter to cast it in copper, so exactly that no-one could distinguish it from the royal original. Henry II initially condemned the culprit to hanging, but later took pity on him, at the petition of the man's brother, merely confining him to a monastery.³ The *Gesta Abbatum* of St Albans (a thirteenth-century source but here rehearsing details from what must have been a twelfth-century record) describes the King's handling of the early charters of St Albans, remarking the lack of seals from Anglo-Saxon diplomas, themselves confirmed in a sealed privilege of Henry I. Having determined to confirm the immunity set out in these charters, the King displayed his approval of a charter of the abbot of St Albans by placing his hand upon it and attaching to it a lace (*laqueus*) from his silk cloak, perhaps as a cord for the abbot's seal.⁴ This was a court to which seals and sealing clearly mattered. Collectively, the stories



Fig. 2.1. Obverse and Reverse of the seal of Henry II as Duke of Normandy. Drawing by or for Roger de Gaignières (d. 1715) from an original (now Angers, Archives départementales Maine et Loire 242H1 no.6, but now without seal). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale ms. Latin 5480 pt 1 p. 258.

recounted above suggest the self-conscious manufacture of a wider sense of Plantagenet majesty and magnanimity.

During his lifetime, Henry II used at least three seals and probably considerably more than this. Most have been described in the standard literature, albeit with a tiresome failure to standardise terminology.⁵ The earliest for which we have evidence is the seal used by Henry as duke of Normandy, after his recognition as duke in 1150 and before his accession as king in 1154 (Fig. 2.1). This derived from a tradition of double-sided equestrian seals, one side depicted with banner, the other with sword, that can be traced to Henry's father, Geoffrey Plantagenet, and thence back in time to earlier rulers of Normandy and Anjou, including William the Conqueror.⁶ Rather than repeat here detailed descriptions that will shortly be available in my edition of Henry's charters, a summary will suffice, based upon the best of the surviving impressions.⁷ The seal is round, approximately 85 millimetres in diameter. The obverse shows a mounted warrior with banner, legend:

+HENRIC<V>S:DEI:GRA<TIA:COMES:AN>
DEGAVORVM.

The reverse shows a mounted warrior with brandished sword, legend:

+HENRICVS:<DEI>:GRATIA: <DV>X:NOR-
MANORVM.

Confusion has been sewn by the detailed drawing of what appears to be this same seal in Francis Sandford's *Genealogical History*, first published in 1677.⁸ Sandford's engraving accords with the images on the surviving wax impressions. However, perhaps working from a damaged original, Sandford's engraver supplied legends for the two sides that fail to correspond with the impressions otherwise known to survive. On both the obverse and reverse, flag and sword sides, he offers the legend:

+HENRICVS:DVX:NORMANORVM:ET:CO-
MES:ANDEGAVORVM.

Given that all surviving impressions of the seal suggest that it employed the invocation DEI GRATIA and that it showed Henry's titles to Anjou and Normandy not together but distinctly on alternate sides, it is best to assume that Sandford's engraver invented a legend for an image whose original was partially illegible.

Henry's pre-1154 seal is very close to that of his father as duke of Normandy and count of Anjou, used by Geoffrey after 1144, equestrian on both sides, with the duke clutching a banner on the obverse and brandishing a sword on the reverse.⁹ It may have been newly fashioned rather than merely recut from Geoffrey's seal. If recut, then it would have involved the substitution of only four letters on each side, altering GAUFRIDVS to HENRICVS. In either case, it fits into a tradition of deliberate imitation that itself reveals a search for authority and stability on behalf of dynasties, across northern Europe, keen to emphasise their continuity with the past, often by stressing their descent from a particularly powerful ancestor whose seal matrix was either recut or closely copied for the seals of his successor.¹⁰

There are nonetheless problems with Henry's ducal seal. Henry was politically active for several years before his recognition as duke of Normandy in 1150. As early as 1141, for example, as *Henricus filius filie regis Henrici rectus heres Anglie et Normann(ie)* he is to be found confirming a grant by his mother in favour of Aubrey de Vere.¹¹ He appears as joint grantor together with his mother in at least three charters issued in England in 1144.¹² In England in 1149, and in Normandy possibly as early as 1147, he granted charters with title as *Henricus ducis Normannorum et comitis Andegavorum filius*.¹³ That he did not have any sort of ducal seal before 1150 is suggested by the terms of a charter issued jointly with his father, at some time between 1144 and 1150, in which they refer to their confirmation under 'our seal' in the singular, implying one rather than two seals.¹⁴ Nonetheless, it is possible, indeed highly likely, that Henry used a privy seal of some sort throughout the 1140s. This indeed may be the origin of the privy seal attributed to him as King, to which we shall return below.¹⁵

Henry was recognised as duke of Normandy from 1150, during the lifetime of his father. He became count of Anjou only after his father's death, in 1151. As a result, it is conceivable that Henry began by using only the side of his later seal with title as duke of Normandy, employing it from 1150 as a single-sided seal, only joined after 1151 by the second side showing him with banner and title to Anjou. In this scenario, a newly cut seal as duke of Normandy might have been joined, after 1151, to a recut version of his father's seal as count of Anjou. The

lack of any surviving impressions of seals attached to charters issued by Henry in 1150–1 prevents certainty here. Following his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1153, Henry also adopted the title duke of Aquitaine in the protocol to his charters. It is significant that this new title seems not to have been incorporated into his seal until after his accession as King of England in 1154. Even thereafter, when Aquitaine was incorporated within the legend, Henry's seals continued to follow a tradition distinct from that of the seals employed by previous dukes of Aquitaine.¹⁶

Already, as early 1153–54, we find Henry looking forwards to the time when, as King of England, he would have a 'seal of kings' (*sigillum regium*).¹⁷ The surviving seals he employed as King, after 1154, are double sided with majesty and equestrian sides and derive their inspiration immediately from the seals of King Stephen employed after 1135, and thence from the seals of the kings of England from William I onwards.¹⁸ As King of England, after 1154, Henry II used at least two such royal seals, generally described in the scholarly literature as Henry's 'first' and the 'second' great seals. As we shall see, this is not necessarily an accurate description. The first of these seals is 90 mm in diameter (Figs 2.2–2.3).¹⁹ Its obverse shows the King enthroned and crowned, the crown itself of Byzantine form with three cross pieces on top and long ear pieces hanging down either side of the king's head almost as far as the shoulders. Legend:

+HENRICVS:DEI:GR<ATI>A:REX:ANGLO-RVM.



The reverse shows a standard equestrian image riding from left to right, the figure wearing a conical helmet with nasal, and brandishing a sword in its right hand. The horse is shown with cloth hugging its belly. Legend:

+HENR':DEI:GRA':DVX:NORMA.....ET:AQV-IT':ET:COM':ANDEG'.

The so-called 'second' great seal differs from the first most obviously in its size (94 rather than 90 millimetres in diameter)²⁰, on the obverse in the appearance of the crown (here without ear pieces) and the legend, here with uncial capital 'h' (Figs 2.4 and 2.5):

+hENRICVS:DEI:GRATIA:REX:ANGLO-RVM.

The reverse is most easily distinguished from that of the first seal by the cloth that hangs down in fringes below the horse's belly, and by the legend, again without capital for the King's name:

+hENRICVS:DVX:NORMANNOR':ET:AQV-ITANOR':ET:COMES:ANDEGAVOR:

In addition to the apparently genuine 'first' and 'second' royal seals of Henry II, a number of spurious or poorly documented casts and matrices testify if not to seals used in the twelfth century then to the on-going fascination with Henry II's reign on behalf of those who later collected or catalogued seals and seal dies. These spuria include the so-called 'Third' great seal of Henry II, known from a single sulphur cast, very close to the obverse of Henry II's second great seal but larger and with drapery differently posed, reverse missing.²¹ The so-called 'Fourth' great seal of Henry II



Fig. 2.2 (far left) Obverse of the 'first' great seal of Henry II. London, TNA DL 10/23. Duchy of Lancaster copyright material in The National Archives is reproduced by permission of the Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Fig. 2.3. (left) Reverse of the 'first' great seal of Henry II. London, TNA DL 10/23. Duchy of Lancaster copyright material in The National Archives is reproduced by permission of the Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster.

is likewise known from a sulphur cast, itself taken from a surviving lead seal matrix, now in the British Museum. This displays only the reverse or equestrian side of a seal close to but slightly larger than Henry II's second great seal, not matching the obverse of the 'Third' great seal.²² As spuria, these objects will play no part in the discussion that follows, save as reminders of Henry II's posthumous success in projecting an image of majesty.

There is vast disparity between the survival rates of Henry's two apparently authentic royal seals. Only a single example of the so-called 'first' great seal is known, used to authenticate an original charter issued at Northampton early in the reign, apparently in 1155, witnessed by Geoffrey the King's brother and therefore certainly before the King's departure for France early in 1156.²³ The charter in question was written by a recognised chancery scribe and must be assumed authentic.²⁴ Its imagery follows that of King Stephen's first great seal, including the use of a crown with Byzantine-style ornaments, described by W. de Gray Birch as '*ansula* or trefoiled pendant fastenings'.²⁵ If this was indeed the King's 'first' great seal, then it could have been manufactured around the time of Henry's coronation, perhaps used to authenticate the King's coronation charter of December 1154.²⁶ By contrast, save for the unique use of the first great seal recorded above, and save for a single instance discussed below, the so-called 'second' great seal was used in the sealing of all other letters and charters of Henry II with surviving seal impressions. This 'second' seal had certainly been introduced by the summer (June/July) of 1155, when it was used to seal an original charter issued at the siege of Bridgnorth.²⁷ It occurs in at least 22 impressions attached to charters certainly issued before 1158, and in more than 200 all told.²⁸ Its very first appearance may indeed be earlier than June 1155, attached to charters for Holy Trinity Priory London, issued at London, probably very soon after the King's coronation in December 1154.²⁹ It continued in use thereafter, through to the end of the King's reign. This raises problems. It suggests that the 'second' great seal may already have been in use by the time that Henry II came to issue letters under his supposed 'first' great seal, at Northampton in 1155. As I shall argue below, it may suggest that what we have here are not 'first' and 'second' great seals but two seals

used simultaneously, one of them surviving in only a single impression, the other in more than 200.

Why, if there was indeed a 'first' attempt to provide Henry II with a great seal, was this first matrix so swiftly set aside? As with the seal used by Henry II before 1154, both 'first' and 'second' great seals are competently engraved, of much the same standard of workmanship as the seals of Henry's contemporaries in northern France. The 'second' seal is thus not markedly more refined than the 'first'.³⁰ Both appear crude when compared to the seals engraved for Henry's sons Richard and John, after the mid-1180s. This great leap forwards in seal engraving from the 1190s has been widely noticed by the historians of art, but perhaps had technological origins that have not been sufficiently explored. In particular, it may suggest advances in the use of rock crystal, water-refracted or even ground glass lenses that allowed goldsmiths to work with a microscopic precision not previously obtainable.³¹

Perhaps Henry's 'first' royal seal was lost. Another possibility lies with its inscription, where the spelling of the King's name on the front and back was inconsistent, HENRICVS versus HENR'. When later dictatorial treatises deal with such matters, they tend to emphasise the need for agreement between seal inscription and style in the written *intitulatio*.³² This insistence can be traced back at least as early as the 1160s, when the Pope and his lawyers had sought for the first time to define what constituted authenticity in a document, both in terms of *authentica scripta* and *sigillum authenticum*.³³ Even so, although there were inconsistencies to the legend of this so-called 'first' great seal, incongruities persisted. As Léopold Delisle long ago pointed out, the legends to none of Henry II's seals accord precisely with the versions of his name written at the head of each of his charters.³⁴ As duke of Normandy after 1150, Henry had employed a seal that incorporated the words DEI GRATIA, even though only a minority of his ducal charters, barely one in ten, employed *Dei gratia* in their opening *intitulatio*.³⁵ As we have seen, the charters issued by Henry II as duke of Normandy credit him, following his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152, with title as 'Duke of Aquitaine', yet no change was made to his seal for the next two years to acknowledge this promotion.³⁶ Even then,

when Henry acquired a new seal as King of England, after 1154, the majesty sides of both his 'first' and 'second' great seals continued to use the *Dei gratia* formula, not added to the *intitulatio* of the charter texts for a further 20 years. Both sides of both great seals name the King HENRICVS or HENR' (with or without capital initial).³⁷ Not so the scribes writing his charters, who almost invariably used only the initial 'H'. The appearance of the form *Henr'* in the written *intitulatio* to an original charter of Henry II can, indeed, be employed as a fairly reliable proof of forgery.³⁸

Such disparities affected other members of Henry II's family. His younger brother, William, for example, employed an equestrian seal describing him as FILIUS IMPERATRICIS, even though the majority of his charters credit him with title as *frater Henrici regis Angl(orum)* (Fig. 2.6).³⁹ Henry's eldest son, Henry the Young King, was supplied after 1170 with a single-sided seal, very much in the Capetian French style, without either sword or banner, with legend as HENRICVS REX ANGLOR' ET DVX NORMANNOR' ET COMES ANDEGAVOR'. Despite the absence of *Dei gratia* from the legend, however, the majority of the Young King's charters, including all those with surviving seal impressions, employ the title *H(enricus) Dei gratia rex*.⁴⁰ Henry's youngest son, the future King John, from 1185 to 1199 employed a seal describing him as son of the King of England and lord of Ireland, even though from 1189 he was technically not son but brother of the King, and even though his charters from this period style him first and foremost as count of Mortain, employing his title as lord of Ireland only in charters relating to specifically Irish business.⁴¹

On Henry's 'second' great seal, the phrase DEI GRATIA, whilst retained for the King's title as King of England, has been omitted from the reverse legend listing Henry's titles to Normandy, Aquitaine and Anjou. This may imply underlying concern about Henry's claim to authority over his wife's lands. More likely, it reflects the simple practicality of fitting a longer than usual legend onto the back of a seal, from which the omission of the letters DEI GRATIA allowed for more extended emphasis upon the lands/peoples over whom Henry claimed to rule. In using *Dei gratia* on his seal but not in the written texts of his letters, Henry's chancery merely followed the

practice of his father, Geoffrey, whose seal as count of Anjou had incorporated the *Dei gratia* formula, absent from the seal of Geoffrey's father, count Fulk. Like those of Henry before 1173, Geoffrey's charters rarely incorporate *Dei gratia* within their opening *intitulatio*.⁴² A claim to rule by God's grace (*Dei gratia*) is also found on the seals, but only rarely in the charter texts, of all kings of England from William II onwards and also on the seal of Henry's mother, Matilda, who from the time of her marriage to the emperor Henry V had used a seal whose legend described her as DEI GRATIA ROMANORVM REGINA.⁴³ To this extent, and as was so often the case, dictaminal theory seems to have parted company with chancery practice. In other words, we have no clear explanation here for why Henry's 'first' great seal should have been replaced by his 'second'.

Here I would like to explore an alternative possibility, linked to the other seals of Henry II recorded or inferred. The most significant and yet most elusive of these is the Exchequer seal, several times referred to in Richard fitz Nigel's *Dialogue of the Exchequer*, described there as being identical to the great seal both in image and inscription.⁴⁴ It has been assumed by the modern authorities that no impression of this Exchequer seal of Henry II survives. The first surviving impression of a royal Exchequer seal is supposedly that of Richard I attached to a charter of January 1190, itself dealing with matters that directly concerned the Exchequer, dated at Westminster, and described in detail in this volume by Adrian Ailes.⁴⁵ It is slightly smaller than Richard's great seals and thus corresponds to Gervase of Canterbury's description of the Exchequer seal as the *sigillum parvum, regia tamen maiestate signatum*.⁴⁶ As such it might well remind us of the disparity between the sizes of the so-called 'first' and 'second' great seals of Henry II. It is at least a possibility, never before explored, that these are not both 'great' seals, but in reality great seal (the 'second', known from more than 200 impressions) and Exchequer seal (the 'first' seal, a single impression). Just as Gervase of Canterbury reports of the great and Exchequer seals of Richard I, Henry's 'first' (possibly Exchequer) seal is slightly smaller (90 mm versus 94 mm) than the ubiquitous 'second' great seal. Problems nonetheless remain. The legend of Henry's 'first' seal is clearly distinct

Fig. 2.4. (right) Obverse of the 'second' great seal of Henry II. London TNA E 42/527.

Fig. 2.5. (far right) Reverse of the 'second' great seal of Henry II. London TNA E 42/527.



from that of the second, as are its devices. The 'first' seal makes its unique appearance at Northampton attached to a document that has no obvious connection to the Exchequer, and at a location distant from either Westminster or Winchester, the usual centres of Exchequer activity. We must therefore tread with caution. In future we should be wary of writing of Henry's 'first' and 'second' great seals, not least because the 'second' may well have been in use before the unique appearance of the 'first'. Even so, we lack any firm proof that the 'first' seal is the Exchequer seal. All that we can report with certainty is that the 'second' was Henry's standard ambulatory great seal.

The great and Exchequer seals by no means exhaust our evidence for seals and sealing under Henry II. By the 1140s, in part as a consequence of the increasing formality that governed the keeping of royal or magnate great seals, there was a trend to employ not only a great seal but a privy seal or signet, often in the form of a ring that accompanied its user even when the great seal was elsewhere. We know of such seals principally because of their use as counterseals, used to stamp the back of the single-sided great seals of the kings of France (who were using a fleur de lys signet as a counterseal from at least 1180), bishops, and in England such seals as those of the earls of Leicester and Chester, again from the 1140s onwards.⁴⁷ In the case of Henry II, there can be little doubt that the King was often physically separated from his great seal. This is suggested by the place-dates to letters and charters, where the issue of charters seems to have clustered

around certain locations and occasions when it can be assumed that the King, his counsellors and the equipment of the chancery were all together in the same place.⁴⁸ It also obtains support from an explicit statement in William fitz Stephen's life of Thomas Becket that, as chancellor, Becket sealed his own personal correspondence with the upper part of the King's seal of which he had custody (*ut altera parte sigilli regii quod et ad eius pertinet custodiam propria signet mandata*), and that his deputy, here described as the *sigillifer regius*, was responsible for all business transacted in chancery. Fitz Stephen notes that this *sigillifer* was to 'sign' all business (*omnia ... manu signentur*).⁴⁹

I do not intend here to enter into the finer questions of sealing practices, as opposed to seals, at Henry II's court, save to note two broad generalisations. Across the reign, from 1154 to 1189, we find an increasing elaboration both in the use of coloured seal cords and coloured wax seals, with a growing preference for coloured cords over parchment or leather tags, and a more frequent use of green wax. Green wax was not entirely unknown in royal seals before 1154. It can be found in an apparently authentic impression of the 'fourth' seal of King Henry I as early as the 1120s or early 1130s.⁵⁰ By the 1180s, however, it had become the standard though not invariable colour of great seal impressions attached to grants in perpetuity.⁵¹ By the 1180s there was as yet no precise significance attached to the use of colouring either of cords or of seals, save that the more solemn charters tended to attract the more magnificent of sealing methods.

As for the custody and day to day operations of the King's seal, here again, a broad outline must suffice. Several men appear during the reign described as king's *sigillifer*. These, I would suggest, were the officers responsible for physically keeping the King's seal, acting as deputies to the titular or *de facto* chancellor, in a role later occupied, under Richard I and King John, by the official known as the vice-chancellor. References under Henry II to a *signator* seem to relate not to the seal but to the office of scribe, otherwise known as *scriptor*, physically responsible for writing the King's letters.⁵² The officer charged with physically applying the seal, an office that would later go under the name of 'spigurnel', is much harder to trace.⁵³ We have a glimpse of his duties in 1170, in the confessions of that 'servant of the royal court' who, according to William fitz Stephen, admitted that he had with his own hand impressed the King's seal to letters, themselves written by a weeping Nigel de Sackville (elsewhere identified as *sigillifer*), ordering that Becket be killed.⁵⁴ We read of sealing again in February 1189, in an account of the monks of Canterbury and their attempts to secure royal letters of protection against Archbishop Baldwin. The monks' proctor waited whilst Hubert Walter dictated the required royal letters, which the proctor then took to be sealed (*ego feci illas sigillare*). When the archbishop arrived he wished to inspect the letters, and dispatched Hubert and Peter of Blois to the chancery (*ad cancellariam*) to recover them. Hubert and Peter broke the King's seal, and in the face of protests from the monks' proctor, the archbishop then retired to a private chamber where he rewrote the letters, inserting three new clauses in his own interest.⁵⁵

Hovering somewhere between the offices of *sigillifer* and spigurnel, a story told by Walter Map reports the complaints of Thurstan fitz Simon, the King's hereditary *dispenser*, that a member of the chancery staff, the *sigillator* Adam of Yarmouth, had failed to issue him with letters setting out Thurstan's office and duties, letters that Map tells us were customarily sealed *gratis* on behalf of all officers of the court. On investigation it transpired that Thurstan had earlier refused a request from Adam for two royal cakes (*liba de dominicis*) with which to entertain guests. The King therefore had Adam sit himself 'at the bench' (*ad scamnum*) with the seal and Thurstan's writ,



Fig. 2.6. Seal of William the brother of King Henry II. Drawing by Robert Glover (c. 1597). London, College of Arms ms. Glover A fo.132r.



Fig. 2.7. Seal of Nicholas de Sigillo. London, TNA E 326/3292.



Fig.2.8. Louis VII 'Abraxax' counterseal. From M. Dalas, *Corpus des sceaux français du Moyen Age. Tome II: Les sceaux des rois et de régence* (Paris 1991), 148 no. 68.

and Thurstan appear before him on bended knee, without his mantle, and present him with two cakes wrapped in a white napkin, after which Adam was to grant Thurstan his writ. Master Adam of Yarmouth, a clerk who appears elsewhere in the records of Henry II's court, may well have been serving as 'spigurnel'. Certainly his title and duties as *sigillator* seem to distinguish him from those of the scribe or *signator*.⁵⁶ Here we can already find a subtle distinction between titles related to the word *sigillum* (the seal, as in *sigillifer* or *sigillator*) that seem already to diverge from those derived from the word *signum* (such as *signator*, associated with signing or writing).⁵⁷

Given the role that their bearers played in issuing letters under the King's seal, the seals of the King's seal-keepers are themselves of no small interest. Of the men who can be identified as chancellors or seal keepers under Henry II, we have surviving impressions of the seals of Thomas Becket and of Geoffrey Plantagenet, the King's bastard son and chancellor, both seals later recycled as counterseals to the seals used by Becket as archbishop of Canterbury, and by Geoffrey as archbishop of York.⁵⁸ We also have at least three impressions of the seal of a man named Nicholas de Sigillo, a prominent Southampton landowner and hereditary keeper of the King's galley, archdeacon of Huntingdon from c. 1164 until his death c. 1192. Nicholas witnessed a dozen or so surviving writs and charters of Henry II, for the most part in England, often in close association with Thomas Becket as chancellor.⁵⁹ He was identified by T. A. M. Bishop as Henry II's seal keeper, although there is no direct evidence for this other than his name and the fact that one of his private charters is written in the hand of a known chancery scribe.⁶⁰ His seal, of which at least three impressions survive, displays an image taken from a fine classical gemstone, showing a beast of prey, probably a lion, grasping another animal by the neck. The prey was perhaps intended to signify a deer, but could well have been read in the twelfth-century as a dragon or other serpent-headed creature (Fig. 2.7).⁶¹ Such seals, in which one animal preys upon another, were fairly common in and around the royal court, being found for example on the seals of the Redvers earls of Devon, which showed an elephant attacked by a gryphon.⁶² On a much more peaceable note,

Walter de Coutances, Henry II's seal keeper in the late 1170s, may have used a seal showing the Agnus Dei and banner, later recycled as his counterseal as archbishop of Rouen, although there is doubt here as to whether this was a device only adopted after Walter's promotion as archbishop.⁶³ The seals used by others of Henry II's seal-keepers, Geoffrey Ridel and Ralph de Varneville, seem not to have been reused as counterseals when these men obtained promotion as bishops and are therefore lost to us.⁶⁴ William Longchamps, chancellor to Henry II's son Richard both before and after Richard's accession as King, from 1189 onwards employed a seal describing him as 'chancellor of the King', used as an episcopal counterseal. This showed the sun and moon, but can only have been made after the accession of Richard as King and was therefore in all likelihood intended as a homage to Richard I's first great seal, itself showing two suns and two crescent moons.⁶⁵

Having dealt with the hard evidence for Henry's seal keepers, let us return to the more speculative question of other seals that may have been used by Henry II, in addition to his great or Exchequer seals. As early as the 1150s, we know that the chancellor, Thomas Becket, was frequently not at the King's side, during the Toulouse campaign for example, or during Becket's famous embassy to Paris. This itself would imply the appointment of deputies or vice-chancellors to seal documents in the chancellor's absence. It might also suggest that the King had means other than the application of his double-sided great seal to authenticate his letters and instructions.

Just such a means, a 'private' or 'privy' seal, is implied as early as 1191 in Gerald of Wales' reference to letters of Richard I sealed at Messina 'with both seals, both large and small' (*una cum regio mandato utroque sigillo, tam maiore scilicet quam minore, munito*). As Pierre Chaplais notes, this is far more likely to refer to a privy seal carried with the King on Crusade than it is to suggest the resealing, in England, with the Exchequer seal left behind in England, of letters sent under the great seal from Sicily.⁶⁶ Attempts have been made to identify a signet ring, now in the British Museum, as Richard's 'small' seal, set with a chrome chalcedony intaglio with a figure (?Minerva or Mercury) carrying a brand with the letter N, surrounded by the inscription S(IGILLVM)

RICHARD(I) RE(GIS) P(?RIVATVM).⁶⁷ But the object in the British Museum is of extremely doubtful provenance, not least because of the ambiguities of its inscription (S' RICHARD' RE' P'). Richard was precisely the sort of figure to whom spuria, plausible or otherwise, were likely to become attached. So too, of course, was Henry II. We must therefore tread with caution in addressing the evidence, circulating within forty years of Henry death, that he himself had possessed a small seal or signet.

A description of this object occurs in a monastic (almost certainly English, perhaps Cistercian) collection of the early thirteenth century, the so-called *Distinctiones Monasticae*, known from a single manuscript, once at S. Nicolas Angers, now in the Bibliothèque Mazarine at Paris.⁶⁸ The passage in question was first published in the 1850s, its significance being immediately apparent to its editor, J. B. Pitra.⁶⁹ Léopold Delisle drew further attention to it in notices published in 1856 and 1857.⁷⁰ However, since Pitra's edition was of bewildering confusion, with no clear indication of the date or reliability of his source, the passage itself has tended to be politely noted but just as politely dismissed by all subsequent authorities.⁷¹ As published by Pitra, and below checked against the Paris manuscript, the passage in question occurs as part of a commentary on the word 'currus' for chariot. Here, the author of the *Distinctiones* notices various allegorical meanings attached to the word, including the fact that *currus* was associated with the classical idea of the triumph, the most glorious of which was in a chariot *laureatum*.⁷²

Unde priuatum sigillum H(enrici) filii comitis Andegauensis et Matildis imperatricis quondam regis Anglorum sculptos habebat in iaspide currum et serpentem trahentem currum cum superscriptione hac in metallo:

*Signum signo meum signo signante tropheum.
Quod prudenter ago, signat serpentis ymago*

The chief reason to doubt the authenticity of this description is the length of the hexameters, that one might suspect were too long to have been inscribed on a signet. Yet we have other twelfth-century counterseals on which two concentric circles of inscription allow the insertion of even longer legends, for example that (in both Latin and French) on one of the counterseals used by Hugh earl of Chester c. 1170.⁷³ As to the image itself, the serpent

drawing a chariot fits perfectly into the tradition of reusing classical intaglios as counterseals. What was surely an even more bizarre classical image, an abrasax-stone (of gnostic origin) showing the mystic divinity Abrasax with the head of a cockerel, the body of a man and the legs of a serpent, carrying a shield and a flail, was employed, albeit recorded only once, as legendless counterseal to a charter of Louis VII of France issued in 1174 (Fig. 2.8).⁷⁴ In the following year, 1175–76, Louis employed another classical gem as counterseal, showing an image of Diana with bow and quiver, and the legend +LODOVICVS REX.⁷⁵ There is no clear indication whether Henry II's 'privy' seal was used before or after his accession as King, perhaps even as early as the 1140s when, as we have seen, Henry presumably possessed a seal used to authenticate his letters and charters before his accession either as duke or later as King. But as Pitra noted, there is at least some evidence for a family tradition here, linking the seal described in the *Distinctiones Monasticae* and the classical gem stone known to have been used by Henry II's son, the future King John, prior to his accession as King.⁷⁶ This appears as a counterseal to his seal used as lord of Ireland and count of Mortain, bearing an image of a (?male) head and carrying the legend SECRETVM IOHANNIS.⁷⁷

If we turn to the iconography of the object described in the *Distinctiones*, there is at least one rather intriguing aspect of this story not previously noticed. Henry II's supposed device, a chariot drawn by a serpent, is strikingly reminiscent of the *drakones* which are said to have drawn the flying chariot of Medea. This was a classical symbol that might be thought to have uncomfortable associations with sorcery. In reality, such associations, far from being repellent, might have appealed to the Plantagenet family with its supposed descent from the she-devil Mélusine. As early as the 1150s, St Bernard is said to have declared of the future King Henry II, 'From the Devil he came, and to the Devil he will surely go', whilst the future Richard I positively revelled in his family's sulphurous reputation, referring to himself with pride as Mélusine's heir.⁷⁸ Medea and her *drakones* were widely known in the Middle Ages, chiefly through Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, 7.217–41, 350–6, 391–401). They are not included amongst the stories told of Medea in Benoît de Sainte-Maure's *Roman*



Fig. 2.9. Seal of Laurence 'domini regis de scaccario hostiarius'. Cambridge, St John's College Archives D19.142.

de Troie (c. 1160), a work assumed to have been written under the patronage either of Henry II or Eleanor of Aquitaine, in which Medea is accorded a particularly prominent role not just as noble heiress to her father's kingdom but as a sorceress.⁷⁹ Benoît nonetheless makes much of a magic gold ring that Medea gave to Jason to protect him from the serpent's bite, whilst the story of Medea's children by Jason and her flight by chariot following their murder is clearly implied in Benoît's references to Medea's subsequent revenge upon her betrayer.⁸⁰

Far closer to the Plantagenet court, indeed integral to the entire trans-maritime government of Henry II, the symbolism of the serpent undoubtedly appealed to Henry and his family. Like Medea fleeing from the wrath of Jason, so Henry II was obliged regularly to take ship across the Channel, both before 1154 to evade his enemies in England, and after his accession as King, to assert his rule in France. It is therefore highly significant that serpentine imagery was integral to the naming of the King and Queen's great ships as *esnecca* ('the snakes'), themselves, like Medea's chariot, responsible for transporting the court from one part of Henry's dominion to another.⁸¹ It is perhaps of even greater significance here that Nicholas de Sigillo, tentatively identified above as Henry's seal keeper in the 1150s and early 1160s, was himself hereditary keeper of the King's *esneccum* berthed in Southampton.⁸² We have already encountered Nicholas' own seal, impressed from a fine classical gemstone, displaying what could be interpreted as a lion attacking a dragon (Fig. 2.7). Given his offices, both at court, and as custodian of the King's ship, the *esneccum*, what more appropriate seal could Nicholas possibly have possessed?⁸³

If we look more closely to Henry's court and its servants, we almost immediately light upon other sigillographic references to snakes or serpents. Some are highly conjectural. The seal of Laurence usher of the King's Exchequer, for example, from c. 1200, shows an antique intaglio that could be interpreted as David with the head of Goliath but might just as easily be identified as Perseus with the (serpent-entwined) head of Medusa (Fig. 2.9).⁸⁴ Other such references are clear. We might begin here with the signet ring, undoubtedly genuine, discovered in the grave of Henry II's courtier Hubert Walter, excavated in 1890. Hubert was

himself associated with Henry II's chancery, later justiciar to Richard I, chancellor to King John, and archbishop of Canterbury. His ring displays a Greco-Egyptian Chnoubis: a gnostic solar icon with the head of a lion and the body of a serpent. Both serpent and lion could have been deliberate references to Hubert's masters, the Plantagenet kings. Hubert's use of a classical gemstone itself followed in the tradition of archbishops Theobald and Thomas Becket both of whom had employed classical gems in their seals, in Becket's case an image that has been identified as Mercury, not only messenger of the gods but bearer of the serpent-entwined *caduceus*.⁸⁵ Becket's 'Mercury' is shown without caduceus. Likewise, the counterseal of Becket's most detested rival and fellow veteran of the household of archbishop Theobald, Roger de Pont-l'Évêque, archbishop of York. Roger's classical counterseal shows a three-headed chimera, apparently of the heads of Jupiter, Apollo and Saturn. In Christian terms, this could be interpreted as the Trinity. In the circumstances of the 1150s and '60s, it might also have served as a reminder of Roger's entanglement in the serpentine coils of Henry II's court.⁸⁶ In the world of seals and sigillography it is important to remember that courtiers tended to mimic the seals or insignia of their superiors. The signs of Thomas Becket, Roger de Pont-l'Évêque, Hubert Walter, and even the ambiguous but perhaps dragon-headed seal of Nicholas de Sigillo, supply yet further circumstantial proof that a serpent may indeed have been a prominent feature of Henry II's most personal display of power.

Besides the notice of a privy seal with serpent and chariot, there is at least one other reference that has been cited to suggest that Henry II possessed a privy seal or signet. In Gerald of Wales's 'Vita' of the King's bastard son and chancellor Geoffrey Plantagenet, Gerald tells us that, following Henry II's death, Geoffrey went to Richard at Fontevraud and there delivered up what appears to have been the King's great seal itself guarded under the seals of various barons who had attended the King's last days.⁸⁷ Shortly before this, Gerald tells us that Geoffrey had received a ring from the dying King engraved with a panther (*annulum aureum optimum cum pantera*). This the King had proposed to send to his kinsman the King of Spain, presumably to Alfonso VIII of Castile, married to Henry

II's daughter Eleanor.⁸⁸ There is no certain proof that this ring was actually worn by Henry let alone that it was used by him as a signet or seal. Nonetheless, L. F. Salzman, in 1914, suggested precisely this, in the process unwisely developing Gerald's words to imply that Henry II used a signet ring 'engraved with his symbol, a leopard'.⁸⁹ That signet rings were known at Henry's court seems undeniable. In 1183, for example, keen to make peace with his rebellious eldest son, Henry II had sent the Young King a precious ring. This in turn is said to have been employed, almost certainly as a signet, together with the Young King's seal, to authenticate deathbed letters in which the Young King sought to secure his father's approval for a series of pious last wishes and bequests.⁹⁰

Henry II's panther, like the 1183 signet ring, tells us little or nothing of the arms of England. As the heraldic authorities have not been slow to point out, there was a clear distinction drawn by medieval writers between panthers and leopards.⁹¹ Isidore of Seville, for example, inserts a long digression on the panther, for the most part derived from Pliny, praising its speed but also commenting on the violence of its conception, the female capable of giving birth to only a single litter, because the cubs so clawed at her womb.⁹² The leopard, by contrast, was believed to be a hybrid animal, the product of breeding between a pard and a lion, likened by Isidore to the degenerate mule or ass.⁹³ Neither animal would have rivalled the lion, the king of beasts, as an appropriate symbol of royal majesty.

The first association between the Plantagenet family and a heraldic beast does indeed appear to have involved a lion rather than a panther. A lion rampant appears on the funeral plaque of Henry II's father, Geoffrey of Anjou, at Le Mans, shown on Geoffrey's shield. It can be identified with the lion said by John of Marmoutier to have been displayed on Geoffrey's shield during his lifetime.⁹⁴ Whatever his own aspirations to mimic the attributes of the lion, the king of beasts, Henry II seems to have been known in France and to his Capetian rivals as the *vulpecula* or 'little fox', a beast whose ruddy colouring matched Henry's own but that in popular lore (derived from the *vulpes paruulas que demoliuntur vineas* of the Song of Solomon 2:15) was widely associated with heresy and treachery.⁹⁵ This



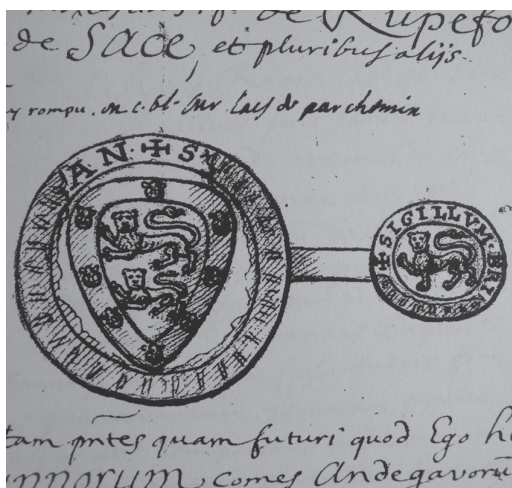
Fig. 2.10. First seal of the commune of Rouen. Paris, Archives nationales S5199^a liasse 16 no. 65.



Fig. 2.11. Seal of the 'Prepositura' of Northampton. Preston, Lancashire Record Office, Lancaster City Charters 3.

in itself may nonetheless suggest a desire in Capetian France to puncture the pretensions of the Plantagenet dynasty and hence supply evidence of a pre-existing identification between Henry II and the king of beasts. A similarly deliberate downplaying of his family's leonine pretensions may explain the claim, made by Gerald of Wales, *c.* 1217, that like pards and lions, John and his allies fled from the very scent of the flower of France.⁹⁶ By this time the English court already boasted a livery that included heraldic elements. As early as the siege of Bedford, for example, perhaps as early as 1138, conspirators plotting to enter the royal camp to kill King Stephen had been

Fig. 2.12. Seal and counterseal of Brice the chamberlain, seneschal of Anjou. Drawing by or for Roger de Gaignières (d. 1715). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale ms. Latin 5480 pt 1 p. 72.



obliged to change their horses, saddles and shields, presumably because all of these objects were in some way marked so as to distinguish royal from non-royal knights.⁹⁷ By the 1180s, we have evidence for court heralds equivalent to the later kings of arms.⁹⁸ The so-called 'Folkingham brooch', an exquisite late twelfth-century badge showing a lion, has generally been described as an object of private baronial provenance. Might it not in reality be the earliest surviving livery badge associated with an officer of the Plantagenet court?⁹⁹ The transformation of Geoffrey Plantagenet's lion into the later 'leopards' of England is a phenomenon that has attracted much attention, that is perhaps hinted at in Gerald of Wales' likening King John and his allies to pards and lions, and that was certainly under way by the 1230s when Matthew Paris records the three leopards sent by the Emperor Frederick II to King Henry III in imitation of the arms of England.¹⁰⁰ In 1251, Henry III commanded that a robe for his own use be decorated with 'three small leopards' on both the front and the back.¹⁰¹

Meanwhile, what are probably lions rather than leopards make their earliest appearance in Plantagenet sigillography in the 1150s or early 1160s, on the single-sided equestrian seal of Henry II's brother, William. On the one surviving impression of this seal, attached to a charter preserved at Burghley House, they are today so badly rubbed that only the lion rampant displayed on the figure's shield is visible.¹⁰² They are recorded, however, both in an early twentieth-century description of this same charter, and in drawings, by

Robert Glover (c. 1597), and in Sir Christopher Hatton's 'Book of Seals', of two other charters of the King's brother on whose seals William is shown on horseback with a lion rampant on his shield, and with a further two lions or leopards rampant on the front and back of the caparison or cloth that covers his horse, all of these lions facing to the right and in the same direction (see Fig. 2.6).¹⁰³ If Henry II bore arms – and the chronicler Ernoul certainly assumed that *les armes le roi d'Engleterre* could be carried on the banner of troops serving at Jerusalem in 1187 – no record of them today survives.¹⁰⁴ But lions appear thereafter on the shield of the equestrian side to the seals of King Richard I and John, including two lions passant/couchant facing to the left on the shield of the single-sided equestrian seal employed by the future King John before 1199, today known only from impressions attached to charters issued as count of Mortain, after 1189, but bearing an inscription identifying John as son of Henry II and lord of Ireland, without reference to Mortain, hence almost certainly first used before 1189, perhaps made at the time of John's knighting in 1185.¹⁰⁵ They appear again (as three lions passant facing to the left) on John's great seal as King of England in use from the summer of 1199, the three lions or leopards of England thereafter becoming the standard arms of England's kings.¹⁰⁶

The association between Henry II and the lion is a significant one. It reminds us that Henry is the first English king certainly linked with the newly-emerging science of heraldry. It also explains the appearance of a lion on the only seal other than Henry's own great or Exchequer seals, known to have been employed in the sealing of the King's charters. A unique original charter of Henry II, from the archives of the Cistercian Abbey of Le Valasse near Rouen, is undoubtedly authentic, written in the hand of the identified chancery scribe XXXV ('Master Germanus'). It can be dated between 1170 and July 1178, apparently after the King's first crossing to Normandy following his adoption of the *Dei gratia* style, and perhaps before his departure for England in May 1175. It is sealed in natural wax with a single-sided seal impression, approximately 72 mm in diameter, showing a lion passant facing to the left, with elaborately curved tail trailing over the lion's back, a six pointed flower or star in the ground between the lion's two front legs,

the lion itself with a frog-like mouth or maw, legend entirely defaced.¹⁰⁷

This same seal is elsewhere identified as the first seal of the commune of the men of Rouen, attached to a document now in Paris, witnessed by the King's *bailli* of Rouen and by Luke de Donjon, mayor (Fig. 2.10).¹⁰⁸ Since the granting of a seal to Rouen may be associated with Henry II's award of privileges to the city, itself to be dated to the 1170s, probably to the period after Rouen's successful defence against the great rebellion against Henry II, and hence after August 1174, this not only narrows the dating criteria for Henry's charter to Le Valasse but once again emphasises the close connection between the King and the symbol of the lion.¹⁰⁹ Rouen's lion, almost certainly a royal beast, is unusual amongst civic devices, where it was far more common for fortresses, castles, or in the case of sea ports, ships, to be adopted as the principal image on town seals, very few of which can be found as early as the 1170s.¹¹⁰ Even so, the subsequent appearance of lions on the seals of other Plantagenet royal boroughs suggests that such places did on occasion adopt specifically leonine symbolism.¹¹¹ In the particular case of the seal of Rouen, and given that the King's privileges for the men of Rouen appear to have been associated with similar grants to the men of Angers and La Rochelle, both of which communities had successfully resisted the rebellion of 1173–4, it is unfortunate that we seem to have no surviving example of a seal for the mayor or commune of Angers before 1482. The earliest surviving seals of La Rochelle date from a century and a half after the events of the 1170s.¹¹² We have very few Norman communal seals from which to draw comparisons, but the Rouen lion is nonetheless perhaps parent to the lion that appears by 1228 on the seal of the commune of Verneuil to which Henry II granted communal privileges before 1172.¹¹³ Before 1216, the reeves and bailiffs of Northampton, a royal borough with close ties to Henry II, had adopted a seal showing an animal 'gardant' facing to the right, with right foreleg pointing forwards and with a long tail terminating in a blob, curling across its back. This has been identified as a 'talbot' or hunting dog. As pointed out to me by Sandy Heslop, it is in fact a lion, albeit a more svelte beast than that of the Norman seals (Fig. 2.11).¹¹⁴



Fig. 2.13. Seal of Stephen de Marçay. Drawing made by or for Roger de Gaignières (d. 1715). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale ms. Latin 5441 pt 2 p. 448.

There are close similarities between the lion of the Rouen seal and another such beast, used in the 1140s to stamp the coins of Robert earl of Gloucester (d. 1147), illegitimate brother of the empress Matilda and hence uncle to the future Henry II. Robert of Gloucester's lion is a far less impressive creature than that of the Rouen seal. It nonetheless shares with the Rouen lion its mane, curved tale and exaggeratedly large mouth or maw.¹¹⁵ William of Gloucester (d. 1183) not only continued minting his father, earl Robert's coinage, but employed a recut version of Robert's seal showing a lion passant, facing to the right, with a large lily stem (possibly a rod of Jesse) behind.¹¹⁶ In these circumstances, and given that earls Robert and William were the son and grandson of King Henry I, it is tempting to suggest a derivation of the English royal lion not from Geoffrey Plantagenet but from his father-in-law, Henry I, perhaps conferred upon Geoffrey at the time of his marriage to the King's daughter in 1127.¹¹⁷ If so, then the deliberate adoption of his grandfather's heraldic symbolism would supply yet further proof of that tendency, long recognised, for Henry II to cloak himself in the traditions and legitimacy bestowed on him by direct descent from Henry I.

We have already seen that the appearance of serpents on the signet seals of royal chancellors may reveal imitation of the King's own privy seal. With the symbol of the lion, there seems to have been a similar tendency for courtiers to adopt what were originally royal insignia. Examples from Henry II's reign are rare, but by

Fig. 2.14. Seal of William of Weekley. Northampton, Northamptonshire Record Office ms. Montagu of Boughton Box 7 no. 3/4.



Fig. 2.15. Counterseal of William of Weekley. Northampton, Northamptonshire Record Office ms. Montagu of Boughton Box 7 no. 3/4.

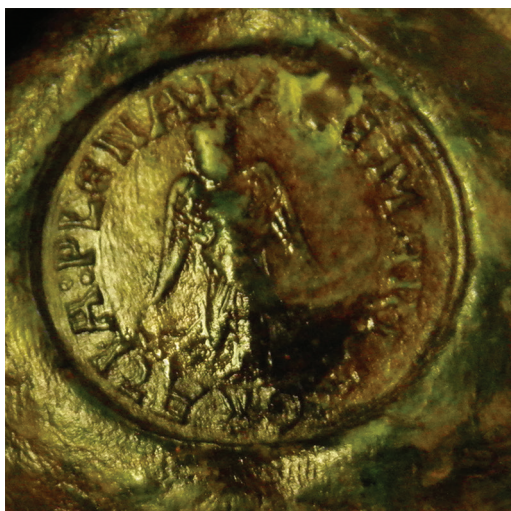


Fig. 2.16. Drawing by Augustine Vincent (d. 1626) of the seal of Richard de Lucy. London, College of Arms ms. Vincent 88 p. 120.



c. 1200, we find Geoffrey fitz Peter, the future earl of Essex and justiciar, and Bricius the Chamberlain, King John's seneschal of Anjou, both employing lions on their seals, either as heraldic devices, or in the case of Bricius the

Chamberlain as what appears to have been a nascent seal of office (Fig. 2.12).¹¹⁸ Bernard de St-Valery, son of Reginald (d. c. 1166) and a regular attender at Henry II's court, sealed a charter of 1181 with an equestrian seal showing him carrying a shield charged with two lions passant, with a further two lions passant used as counterseal.¹¹⁹ Beasts that appear earlier, on the seals of Henry II's courtiers Richard de Canville and Ralph fitz Stephen may or may not represent lions.¹²⁰ Conversely, seals such as that of William l'Archévêque, lord of Parthenay, that show rivals of the Plantagenet kings struggling with or taming lions, may contain a message not just of brute strength but of political intent.¹²¹

And so we return from the King himself to his court. The majority of Henry II's courtiers whose seals have survived employed conventionally episcopal or baronial imagery, in the latter case most often single-sided and equestrian. The equestrian images in such cases are mostly mounted and armed with shield and sword. On occasion, however, as with the seals of the King's falconers William de Hauville or William of Weekley, or with Stephen de Marçay, Henry II's seneschal of Anjou (Fig. 2.13), the subject can be depicted on horseback in pursuit of the King's favourite sport of falconry.¹²² William of Weekley's seal offers an intriguing blend of secular and pious motifs, showing its owner on one side hawking, but with a counterseal of a four-winged seraph surrounded by the opening words of the Angelus, AVE:MARIA:GRATIA:PLENA (Figs 2.14 and 2.15).¹²³ The juxtaposition here of hawks and archangels surely tells us something of the often grim humour of Henry's court.

That there was considerable self-consciousness to these seals is apparent in other instances where courtier seals employ puns or mimic the seal of the King. Some seals were canting, as was that of Richard de Lucy, a native of Lucé in the Orne (cant. Juvigny-sous-Andaine), who used the pun Lucy/lucius as the basis for a seal unusual in being vesica (i.e. fish) shaped, showing an image of a large fish, clearly a pike.¹²⁴ Ignored by Pliny and Isidore, the pike or 'lucius' is nonetheless described by Henry II's contemporary, Alexander Neckham, as the 'water wolf', a 'ravager' of the aquatic world, from whose gullet there is no escape.¹²⁵ It is particularly significant that Richard de



Fig. 2.17. (far left) Seal of Thurstan fitz Simon 'Dispensator regis'. Oxford, Brasenose College muniments. Rollright Charter 40.



Fig. 2.18. (left) Seal of Aimery Dispensator, son of Thurstan fitz Simon. Oxford, Brasenose College muniments. Rollright Charter 8.

Lucy should have opted for such a device given his own reported outburst against the petty knights of his generation who affected the use of seals even though their ancestors could claim no such privilege, better reserved to 'kings and great men'.¹²⁶ What may have been the legend of Richard's seal, lost from the original impressions but preserved in an antiquary drawing, reads SIGILLUM RIC(ARD)I DE IURIS PACE (Fig. 2.16).¹²⁷ If this was indeed the seal's legend then there may have been a deliberate pun here, depending upon how one translates the words *de iuris pace*, either (in Latin) as 'concerning the peace of the law' or (far more menacingly, in Middle English) 'from your (or from the law's) pike' (Middle English 'pik/peke').¹²⁸ That the seal was always potentially humorous is suggested by the counterseal of Richard's son, Godfrey de Lucy, bishop of Winchester. This shows the head of a pike issuing from water, open-mouthed, holding a bird or other animal in its mouth, behind this a pastoral staff, apparently in acknowledgement of the voracity of Godfrey's appetite for episcopal office.¹²⁹

We have already encountered the King's *dispenser*, Thurstan fitz Simon in the writings of Walter Map, obliged by the King to go on bended knee to present another court official with a royal 'cake' as peace offering. What may well be this same cake was adopted as the device on the seals of Thurstan and his son, both of which show a cake or loaf displayed on an elaborate dish (Figs 2.17 and 2.18).¹³⁰ Robert Belet employed a seal that showed him seated



Fig. 2.19. (left) Seal of Thomas Noel. Stafford, Staffordshire Record Office D798/1/1/1.



Fig. 2.20. (above) Seal of Thomas Basset. Keele University Library ms. Sneyd 739.



Fig. 2.21. Seal of Osbert de Capella. Nottingham, Nottinghamshire Archives DD SR 102X/12.

on a wine barrel with a knife in either hand: a reference to his office as hereditary butler to the court of Henry II, yet also a deliberate and irreverent imitation of the majesty side of the King's great seal, here replacing the throne with a barrel, and the orb and sword with the tools of the butler's trade.¹³¹ A similarly mimetic image appears on the seal of Thomas fitz Noel, sheriff of Staffordshire in the 1180s, that today survives only in a defaced state but that appears to show Thomas seated, arms outstretched, with a ball or cup in each hand (Fig. 2.19).¹³² Thomas Basset (d. c. 1182), sheriff of Oxfordshire and royal justice used both a standard equestrian baronial seal and a smaller classical seal, apparently impressed from a Roman gemstone (Fig. 2.20). This showed a seated semi-naked classical warrior, with shield and spear, perhaps intended by Thomas to represent largesse or justice enthroned.¹³³ Henry d'Oilly II (d. 1196) used an oval seal, impressed from a classical or classicised gemstone showing a mounted warrior riding from right to left. Since its legend reads merely +SIGILLVM HENRICI DOLI it could in theory have been inherited from his father, Henry d'Oilly I (d. 1163), sheriff of Oxfordshire and constable at Henry II's court.¹³⁴ At the opposite end of the spectrum from the classicising pretensions of Thomas Basset or Henry d'Oilly, we find the seal of Osbert de Capella, King's servant (*seruiens*), a remarkable object without any legend (Fig. 2.21), distinguished merely by three regular and deeply impressed indentations. Assuming an identity between Osbert de Capella and Osbert clerk of the King's chamber, these indentations were perhaps made with the ends of the keys that Osbert had in his custody as keeper of the King's most precious itinerant treasures.¹³⁵

Humour can be found not only in the images but the legends of courtier seals. Stephen of Thurnham, one of the King's enforcers, employed a conventional round equestrian seal, but complemented it with a counterseal bearing the legend DEVS SALVET CUI MITTOR.¹³⁶ The nineteenth-century cataloguer of this inscription translated it with fine chivalric sentiment as 'God save her to whom I am escort'. To contemporaries, only too aware of Stephen's potential to harm them, it might more readily have been interpreted as a warning: 'God save him to whom I am

sent!'¹³⁷ I have argued elsewhere that such seals supply what early modern historians would term a 'hidden transcript', revealing the gulf between the majesty projected in Plantagenet self-representation and the underlying sense that the Plantagenet dynasty was an upstart phenomenon, with violence and repression as its chief sustaining characteristics.¹³⁸

Let us end this survey with yet further evidence of self-consciousness. Whatever we make of the idea of nationalism before the nation state, it is clear that there was competition amongst princes in their choice of symbols, and that heraldic devices only intensified this competition. The leopards or lions of England, first recorded in the 1150s or 60s, were directly challenged by the fleurs de lys of France, themselves incorporated into the counterseal of Philip Augustus from the 1180s onwards, ubiquitous by the early thirteenth century when Gerald of Wales could mock at King John and his allies as pards and lions fleeing from the very scent of the flower of France.¹³⁹ That other sovereigns used similar symbols is not in doubt: by the thirteenth century, the kings of Castile were sealing their more solemn charters with a lead bulla that showed on one side a canting towered castle (for Castile) and on the other a lion rampant (for León).¹⁴⁰ Equally intriguing are the instances in which rivals of the kings of England were provoked into challenging English hegemony. One such instance is relatively well known: from only a few years after the introduction of the DEI GRATIA formula to the seals of kings William II and Henry I of England, the rulers of Scotland chose to incorporate within the legends to their seals a claim that they were RECTORE DEO REX SCOTTORVM.¹⁴¹ A related instance seems never before to have been noticed, but is particularly appropriate in the present context, in an essay contributed to a volume first inspired by the cataloguing of seals surviving in Wales. It concerns what appears to be a unique record of the seal of the Lord Rhys, prince of South Wales (d. 1197).

On the tomb effigy attributed to him in St David's Cathedral, Rhys is shown in full armour, his head resting on the body of a lion with a lion rampant displayed on his breast. There is no doubt, however, that this tomb is a much later monument, either to Rhys or to another knight, probably of the late fourteenth century.¹⁴² Previously unnoticed, in the College

of Arms, however, there survives a description c. 1600, without illustration, of a seal attributed to the Lord Rhys, preserved on a charter then belonging to the Talbot family.¹⁴³ That there was a deliberate honouring of the memory of Rhys ap Gryffyd by the Talbots is well known. Indeed, the tomb at St David's has been tentatively attributed to Talbot family patronage, and its heraldry ('a lion rampant within a bordure engrailed') is identical to that used by the Talbots themselves as their coat of arms from at least 1301.¹⁴⁴ The seal described from the Talbot deed, however, showed not a lion but a conventional equestrian warrior. What is much more intriguing, its counterseal is described as showing a horse 'passant', with flowing mane and tail, with the legend: SECRETUM RESI.¹⁴⁵ The significance of horse symbols to the 'Celtic' world is well known. It places Rhys in that same milieu as Gerald of Wales' account of the 'inauguration' ritual of those kings of Ulster, said to have bathed themselves in freshly slaughtered horse-meat.¹⁴⁶

The Welsh seal suggests that competitive symbolism may have extended from Henry II's chief enemies in the south and east to those on his most westerly frontiers. Even if our report of it is merely a much later attempt to assign heraldic symbolism to a Welsh prince himself with no real interest in such things, it reveals the longstanding desire to supply each nation with its appropriate zoomorphic symbolism. Henry II already had the lion. If the *Distinctiones Monastici* are to be believed, he also had the dragon or the serpent. In this environment of competing symbols, Henry's reported dispatch of a 'panther' to his son-in-law, the King of Castile, could be interpreted not only as proof of his own leonine pretensions but as a deliberate reference to Castilian rivalry with the neighbouring kings of León, themselves now represented by the lion. In such circumstances, what more natural development than that the Welsh should seek to appropriate the symbolism of the horse?

In all of this, the seals of Henry II, his courtiers, friends and rivals, mirror far wider concerns of twelfth-century kingship. They revel not just in humour but in provocation, not just in family but in much more ancient classical associations. They combine wit with boastfulness, innovation with deep reverence for the past. They are, in short, fit symbols of

a dynasty and court poised between soaring ambition and bottomless self-doubt. In any discussion of Plantagenet court culture they should henceforth play a significant part.

Notes

- * What follows is an abbreviated version of material to be presented in due course as part of the introductory volume to *The Letters and Charters of Henry II*, ed. N. Vincent and others (Oxford, forthcoming). For their assistance, I am indebted to Adrian Ailes, Richard Allen, Julie Barrau, Hugh Doherty, Kathryn Dutton, Henry Fairbairn, Olga Mendez Gonzalez, Martin Henig, Sandy Heslop, Brian Kemp, Lars Kjaer, John Mitchell, and Jörg Peltzer.
- 1 N. Vincent, 'The Court of Henry II', in *Henry II: New Interpretations*, eds C. Harper-Bill and N. Vincent (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 278–334, esp. pp. 323–34.
- 2 *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. E. Searle (Oxford 1980), 214, and for the chronicler's reliability on this as on other matters.
- 3 Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium: Courtiers' Trifles*, ed. M. R. James and revised by C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1983), pp. 494–5.
- 4 Matthew Paris, 'Gesta Abbatum', in *Chronica Monasterii S. Albani*, ed. H. T. Riley, 7 vols (London 1863–76), 4 part 1, pp. 150–6, esp. p. 156, *Rex manum apposuit, nam laqueum pallii sui pro testimonio apposuit*. The same word, *laqueus*, is used in the Pipe Roll for 1182 to describe the cords, or 'laqueii', purchased for the charters by which the bishops of England were expected to guarantee the King's last will and testament: *Pipe Roll 28 Henry II*, p. 28.
- 5 The standard authority here, pending *Letters of Henry II*, remains W. de Gray Birch, 'On the Seals of King Henry the Second, and of his Son the so-called Henry the Third', *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, 2nd series xi (1878), 301–37. For other standard descriptions, see A. B. Wyon, *The Great Seals of England from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (London, 1887); W. de Gray Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 6 vols (London, 1887–1900), i.
- 6 P. Bony, *Un Siècle de sceaux figurés* (Paris 2002), pl. 3, nos 12–13; pl. 4 no. 19, 10–11 nos 52–3, 55, 58.
- 7 Paris, Archives nationales J219 no.1, and London, BL Harley Charter 84.C.3, with the legend reconstructed with the help of fragments from other exemplars. For full details, see Birch, 'Seals of Henry II', 307; Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, 337 nos 6320–2; *Letters of Henry II*, ed. Vincent.

- 8 Sandford, *Genealogical History of the Kings of England* (London, 1677), also in the 2nd ed., as *A Genealogical History of the Kings and Queens of England* (London, 1707), p. 54, pl. 1.
- 9 G. Demay, *Inventaire des sceaux de la Normandie* (Paris, 1881), p. 4, no. 20, from an original now at Rouen, Archives départementales Seine-Maritime 20HP5, whence *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154*, vols. iii–iv (1135–1154), ed. H. A. Cronne and R. H. C. Davis (Oxford, 1968–71), no. 77, with a further facsimile in C. H. Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (New York, 1918), pl. 7b; Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, 336 no. 6317 (from BL Seal Casts lxxx. 46–7, perhaps from the same impression as Demay); Bony, *Un Siècle de sceaux figurés*, p. 27, pl. 10–11, nos 52–3, 58.
- 10 J.-F. Nieuws, 'L'Hérédité des matrices de sceaux princiers au XIIe siècle, entre conscience lignagère et discours politique', in M. Gil and J.-L. Chassel (eds), *Pourquoi les sceaux? La sigillographie, nouvel enjeu de l'histoire de l'art*, (Lille 2012), 217–39, esp. p. 223, for the likelihood that Henry's ducal seal was made anew rather than merely recut
- 11 *Regesta*, iii, no. 635.
- 12 *Regesta*, iii, nos 43, 111, 372.
- 13 *Regesta*, iii, nos 320, 420, 666, 704, 735 (with date that could be interpreted as early as Easter 1147), 795.
- 14 *Regesta*, iii, no. 304: 'a(u)ctoritate sigilli nostri confirmamus', from an original prepared for sealing with only a single seal.
- 15 See below, pp. 14–16.
- 16 The seals of William IX and William X dukes of Aquitaine appear to have been single sided, equestrian shown with sword, horse at the gallop, the figure itself bare headed rather than helmeted as in English or Norman equivalents: F. Eygun, *Sigillographie du Poitou jusqu'en 1515* (Poitiers 1938), 159 nos 1–2 and pl. 1 no. 1.
- 17 *Regesta*, iii, no. 90: 'Si annuente Deo regnum Angl(ie) adeptus fuero regali auctoritate confirmabo et sigilli regii attestacione corroborabo'.
- 18 The best comparative descriptions here are now supplied by Bony, *Un Siècle de sceaux figurés*, esp. pl. iii–xi.
- 19 For alternative descriptions, see Birch, 'Seals of Henry II', 308–9 and plate; Wyon, *Great Seals*, 15 no. 30–1 and pl. v.
- 20 Here described after BL Additional Charter 5719 (*Letters of Henry II*, no. 2567). For alternative descriptions, see Birch, 'Seals of Henry II', 309–11 and plate; Wyon, *Great Seals*, pp. 15–16, nos 32–3; p. 149, appendix B, plate v; Birch, *Catalogue*, i, pp. 11–12, nos 56–76 and pl. 1, and esp. by Sandy Heslop, in G. Zarnecki (ed.), *English Romanesque Art 1066–1200* (London, 1984), p. 304, no. 333. An online facsimile is available at <http://reed.dur.ac.uk/~xtf/view?docId=ead/dcd/dcdmseal.xml#ERs no. 3021> [accessed: 6 June 2014].
- 21 BL Seal Cast li.2, whence Birch, 'Seals of Henry II', 308, whence Wyon, *Great Seals*, p. 16; Birch, *Catalogue*, p. 12, no. 77, 'believed to be derived from a leaden matrix found in an advanced state of decay'.
- 22 A. B. Tonnochy, *Catalogue of British Seal Dies in the British Museum* (London, 1952), p. 4, no. 4 and pl. ii, no. 4, the cast described by Birch, 'Seals of Henry II', 308, whence Wyon, *Great Seals*, p. 16; Birch, *Catalogue*, i, pp. 12–13 no. 78.
- 23 *Letters of Henry II*, no. 1817, from an original first noticed by John Doubleday in *Archaeologia*, xxvi (1836), 460–1, misidentifying the shield strap as a torque and suggesting that the pendants from the crown were used to tie it, like a bonnet, beneath the chin.
- 24 T.A.M. Bishop, *Scriptores Regis* (Oxford, 1961), pl. xxvi(b), scribe xxviii, recorded as writing 15 surviving original charters of Henry II, all of them issued in England, all of them almost certainly before August 1158, six of them still carrying legible impressions of Henry II's second great seal.
- 25 W. de Gray Birch, 'On the Great Seals of King Stephen', *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, 2nd series xi (1878), 5; *Regesta*, iii, pp. xvi–xvii; *Regesta*, iv, pls i–ii. For clasps on the crown recorded as breaking, see the story told by Eadmer, in *Eadmeri Historia Novorum*, ed. M. Rule (London, 1884), p. 293.
- 26 W. Stubbs, *Select Charters*, 9th edn (Oxford, 1913), p. 158.
- 27 *Letters of Henry II*, no. 290.
- 28 *ibid.*, introduction.
- 29 *ibid.* nos 1633–4. Heslop's attempts to date two other charters with this seal to February 1155 (*English Romanesque Art*, p. 304, no. 333) are based upon too restrictive a series of dating criteria. In reality these charters could date from any time between 1155 and August 1158.
- 30 For a contrary opinion, see Heslop, *English Romanesque Art*, p. 304, no. 333, describing the first matrix as 'of rather poor quality ... hastily produced'.
- 31 For preliminary work here, drawn to my attention by Sandy Heslop, see the remarks of G. Kornbluth, *Engraved Gems of the Carolingian Empire* (Philadelphia, 1995), p. 20 and figures 14.3, 18.1, 18.3, on the magnifying properties of cabuchon rock crystal, already known to engravers in Carolingian and presumably Roman times. See also the suggestions by J. Gage, *Colour and Meaning: Art, Science and*

- Symbolism* (London, 1999), pp. 90–1, that the words *cauilla* and *spectaculum*, as employed in Alexander Neckham's *De nominibus utensilium*, refer to magnifying tools used in manuscript illumination, perhaps even to a ground glass magnifying lens and to glass spectacles. This runs contrary to the definition supplied in the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources: Fascicule II, C*, ed. R. E. Latham (Oxford 1981), 307, sub '*cavilla*' (3rd definition), which cites Neckham's own use of the word (Neckam, *De Naturis Rerum*, ed. T. Wright (London, 1863), p. 279, c.168) to refer to a peg or pin, in this instance the peg of a stringed musical instrument, the 'rheda'.
- 32 See here Konrad von Mure (d.1281), *Die Summa de arte prosandi*, ed. W. Kronbichler (Zürich, 1968), p. 166, as cited elsewhere in this volume by Jörg Peltzer, to whom I owe this reference. See below, p. 63.
- 33 See here J. Peltzer, 'Bildgewordene Autorität: Annäherungen an einen Vergleich der Siegel der Reichsfürsten und der Earls im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert', in *Autorität und Akzeptanz: Das Reich im Europa des 13. Jahrhunderts. Festschrift für Stefan Weinfurter*, ed. W. Bomm, H. Seibert and V. Türck (Heidelberg forthcoming).
- 34 L. Delisle, *Recueil des Actes de Henri II roi d'Angleterre et duc de Normandie concernant les provinces françaises et les affaires de France: Introduction* (Paris, 1909), p. 236.
- 35 Only 15 of Henry's 145 surviving ducal charters employ the *Dei gratia* formula. Of these, *Regesta*, iii, nos 206, 326, 332 (merely an inscription) which survive as originals, appear to be authentic. Others (*ibid.*, nos 126, 310, 996–7, 999/311, from the circle of St Augustine's Abbey Bristol, or no. 325 for Fontenay) are probably or definitely spurious.
- 36 Found in 70 instances noted in *Letters of Henry II*.
- 37 Birch, *Catalogue*, i, pp. 11–12, nos 56–76 and plate 1; *idem*, 'Seals of Henry II', 309–11 and plate
- 38 N. Vincent, 'Henry II and the Monks of Battle: The Battle Chronicle Unmasked', in R. Gameson and H. Leyser (eds), *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting* (Oxford 2001), pp. 272–4.
- 39 Amongst William's 30 surviving charters, *frater regis* is the formula used in all instances save for a single case in which William describes himself as *imperatricis filius frater regis*: Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale mss. 3909/3 fo.44r; 3909/13 fo.53v. For his seal, itself attached to a document in which he is styled *frater H(enrici) reg(is) Angl(orum)*, see below n. 102. I am grateful to Adrian Ailes for drawing these anomalies to my attention.
- 40 R.J. Smith, 'Henry II's Heir: The Acta and Seal of Henry the Young King, 1170–83', *English Historical Review* 116 (2001), 302–7, with facsimile in *Facsimiles of Early Charters in Oxford Muniment Rooms*, ed. H.E. Salter (Oxford, 1929), no. 37.
- 41 As noted by A. Ailes, 'The Seal of John, Lord of Ireland and Count of Mortain', *The Coat of Arms*, n.s. iv (1981), 343–4. For examples of post-1189 Irish charters with joint title to Mortain and Ireland, most often, although not invariably, in that order, see G. Mac Niocaill 'The Charters of John lord of Ireland' *Repertorium Novum*, iii (1963–4), 289–304, nos 3–11; K. W. Nicholls 'A Charter of John Lord of Ireland in favour of Matthew Ua Hénni archbishop of Cashel' *Peritia*, ii (1983), 269.
- 42 G. de Manteyer, 'Le Sceau-matrice du comte d'Anjou Foulques le Jeune (1109–1144)', *Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de France*, 6th series x (1901), 308, 323, 326, which reconstructs the legend of Geoffrey's seal as +G[AUFRIDVS DEI GRATIA COMES ANDEGAVOR]VM, as drawn to my attention by Kathryn Dutton.
- 43 Birch, *Catalogue*, i, 5 no. 22 (William II), 5–10 nos 23–42 (all of the seals of Henry I and Stephen), 10 no. 54 (Matilda).
- 44 Richard fitz Nigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario: The Dialogue of the Exchequer*, ed. E. Amt (Oxford 2007), 20–1, 28–9, 94–7; P. Chaplais, *English Royal Documents: King John – Henry VI, 1199–1461* (Oxford 1971), 46–7.
- 45 Ailes, [this volume], pp. 105–7.
- 46 *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (London 1879–80), i, 509, as cited by Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, 24.
- 47 For the French fleur-de-lys as counterseal, derived from the majesty side of the seal where the kings of France were shown from the time of Philip I onwards seated on a throne holding a fleur de lys in their right hand, this image itself derived from the flowery head of the sceptre held in the right hand of earlier kings, from at least the time of Rudolf III (993–1032), see M. Dalas, *Corpus des sceaux français du Moyen Age. Tome II: Les sceaux des rois et de régence* (Paris, 1991), esp. pp. 39–42, 149n., 150 no. 70bis; C. Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late-Medieval France*, trans. S. R. Huston (Berkeley, 1991), p. 202. For England, see C. R. Cheney, *English Bishops' Chanceries 1100–1250* (Manchester 1950), 50–1; T. A. Heslop, 'Seals', in Zarnecki (ed.), *English Romanesque Art 1066–1200* (London, 1984), p. 299, 317 no. 371; *idem*, 'The Seals of the Twelfth-Century Earls of Chester',

- The Earldom of Chester and its Charters*, ed. A. T. Thacker (Chester, 1991), pp. 187–92; D. Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins: The Roots and Branches of Power in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 210–11; D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000–1300* (London, 1992), pp. 244–6; A. Ailes, ‘The Knight’s Alter Ego: From Equestrian to Armorial Seal’, in N. Adams, J. Cherry and J. Robinson (eds), *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, British Museum Research Publications clxviii (London, 2008), pp. 8–9.
- 48 N. Vincent, ‘Les Normands de l’entourage d’Henri II Plantagenêt’, in P. Bouet and V. Gazeau (eds), *La Normandie et l’Angleterre au Moyen Âge* (Caen, 2003), pp. 75–8, esp. pp. 78–82
- 49 *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. J.C. Robertson and J.B. Sheppard, 7 vols (London, 1875–85), iii, p. 18.
- 50 Cambridge University Library EDC 1/H/1, loose seal impression from an unidentified charter of Henry I. Thereafter, no impressions in green wax are noted for King Stephen, in *Regesta*, iii.
- 51 *Letters of Henry II*, introduction.
- 52 As in Herbert of Bosham’s description of the fees payable to the *sigillifer*, the *signator* or the notary in Becket’s chancery, *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, iii, 224, with discussion in *Letters of Henry II*, introduction.
- 53 For the spigurnel, first recorded in 1193, perhaps an office that developed from that of the four serjeants of the King’s Chapel mentioned in the reign of Henry I, see H.C. Maxwell-Lyte, *Historical Notes on the Use of the Great Seal of England* (London, 1926), pp. 287–8; *Rotuli Chartarum*, ed. T. D. Hardy (London 1837), p. 169. For the possibility that a man named Martin de Capella can be identified as Henry II’s spigurnel, see *Letters of Henry II*, introduction. For the equestrian seal of a kinsman and namesake of Martin, see Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, 262 no. 5795, +SIGILLV[M MAR]TINI DE LA CHAPELE.
- 54 *Becket Materials*, iii, p. 114, where the *serviens de curia regis* could be either a ‘servant’ or a ‘serjeant’. It is perhaps worth noting here that the lands of Martin de Capella, putative ‘spigurnel’ in the 1150s, were confiscated in the aftermath of Becket’s murder: *Letters of Henry II*, no. 2811n.
- 55 *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, ed. W. Stubbs (London, 1865), pp. 281–3, no. 297, whence the abbreviated account, which also preserves the form of the royal letters as authorised by the archbishop, in *Gervase of Canterbury*, i, 439–40, as noted in *Letters of Henry II*, no. 480.
- 56 Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 486–7. For Adam, see the full biographical note in *Letters of Henry II*, introduction.
- 57 Here, bearing in mind the remarks of Paul Harvey, above [this volume], pp. 1–4.
- 58 *English Episcopal Acta*, hereafter, *EEA*, ii, p. l, for Becket’s counterseal, with legend as +SIGILLVM TOME LVND’, for which see below n. 85. *EEA*, i, pp. lx–lxi; *EEA*, xx, pp. cxxv–vi, for Geoffrey’s counterseal, showing him dressed as a clerk and carrying what may be a stylus and writing tablet, legend +SIGILLVM GALFRIDI CLERICI REGIS ANGLOR’ FILII, later used, in slightly modified version, as counterseal to his seal as archbishop of York. It is worth questioning whether the CLERICI of the present counterseal represents a recutting of a word that might originally have read CANCELLARI.
- 59 For Nicholas, see *Letters of Henry II*, nos 1002n., 1226n.; *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. Searle, pp. 176–7.
- 60 Bishop, *Scriptores Regis*, 25–6, whence *Regesta*, iii, p. xi, and cf. T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England*, 6 vols (Manchester 1920–33), i, 129n.
- 61 Oxford, Bodleian Library ms. d.d. Queen’s College 343 (Nicholas to Berta, oval, natural wax); Warwick, Warwickshire Record Office CR 895.13.1 (Nicholas to Richard of Portland, oval, dark green wax), and TNA E 326/3292 (Nicholas to St Denys’ Southampton, oval, natural wax varnished brown, whence fig. 2.7), seal interior 25mm., exterior 40mm. diameter, legend: <+N>ICOLAI DE SIGILLO. I am indebted to Hugh Doherty, Martin Henig and Sandy Heslop for their assistance here.
- 62 *Charters of the Redvers Family and the Earldom of Devon, 1090–1217*, ed. R. Bearman, Devon and Cornwall Record Society n.s. 37 (1994), 50–1; *Monasticon Anglicanum*, W. Dugdale, (rev ed. J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel; 6 vols. in 8, London, 1817–30), hereafter Dugdale, *Monasticon*, v, 106, and for other examples used by the Clinton and Berkeley families, see below n. 121.
- 63 Walter is not recorded with counterseal as bishop of Lincoln: *EEA* i, p. lxi. For his archiepiscopal counterseal with the Pascal lamb facing to the right and flag behind, round, approx. 28mm. diameter, legend +S’WALTERI DE CONSTANTIIIS, see Paris, Archives nationales L974 no. 942 (12 June 1202), as drawn to my attention by Richard Allen, with a further example from Ibid. J213 described in Douët d’Arcq, *Collection*

- de Sceaux des archives de l'Empire, 3 vols (Paris 1863–8), ii, no. 6364. The failure to specify title as archbishop perhaps suggests the reuse of a pre-episcopal seal. Set against this, the Agnus Dei was closely associated with the city of Rouen, cf. B. Bedos, *Corpus des sceaux français du Moyen Âge I: les sceaux des villes* (Paris 1980), pp. 443–5, nos 592–5. It may therefore have been newly chosen by Walter after his election as archbishop in 1184.
- 64 EEA xxxi, p. cxlvii; Demay, *Sceaux de Normandie*, no. 2228.
- 65 EEA xxxi, p. cxlviii and pl. 4, a sunburst with a crescent moon, legend +DOMINI REGIS ANGLIE CANCELL', with the name W. DE LONGO CAMPO in the bend of the crescent moon. William's successor as bishop of Ely, Eustace, vice-chancellor under Richard I, seems to have adopted an entirely new countersal, with Ely references, after his election as bishop. The same seems to be true of Hubert Walter, whose archiepiscopal countersal commemorates the martyrdom of Thomas Becket: EEA, ii, p. lii; EEA xlii, pp. cx–xi. For the suns and moons, see Ailes, [this volume], p. 104.
- 66 Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, pp. 2, 23–5, citing Gerald, 'De Vita Galfridi archiepiscopi', in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. J. S. Brewer and others, 8 vols (London, 1861–1891), iv, p. 426, and for the later privy seal of King John, known only from reports rather than from any surviving impressions, see Maxwell-Lyte, *Great Seal*, pp. 20–1, with notes on the appearance of later privy seals, from the reign of Edward I onwards, at p. 42ff., noting that these were invariably single-sided, displaying the arms of England.
- 67 P. E. Lasko, 'The Signet Ring of Richard I of England', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* ii (1960–4), 333–5, and cf. Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, p. 24. Lasko identifies the figure as Minerva engraved in green plasma. It has more recently been identified as Mercury engraved in chrome chalcedony, by M. Henig, 'The Re-use and Copying of Ancient Intaglios Set in Medieval Personal Seals', in *Good Impressions*, eds Adams *et al.*, p. 27.
- 68 Ms. 3475, c. 1220. For the *Distinctiones*, at one time (falsely) attributed to Ralph of Coggeshall, see most recently A. Wilmart, 'Un Répertoire d'exégèse composé en Angleterre vers le début du XIII^e siècle', *Mémorial Lagrange* (Paris, 1940), pp. 307–46; R. W. Hunt, 'Notes on the *Distinctiones monasticae et morales*', in *Liber Floridus: Mittellateinische Studien. Paul Lehmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. B. Bischoff and S. Brechter (St Ottilien, 1950), pp. 355–62; R. Sharpe, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland Before 1540*, 2nd ed. (Turnhout, 2001), p. 446, noting the general consensus that this is not the work of Ralph of Coggeshall but that it has a Lincolnshire, perhaps Louth Park connection. The endpapers to the Mazarine manuscript carry a s.xvi ownership mark for the abbey of S. Nicolas at Angers. It is worth noting that S. Nicolas was the mother house of Spalding Priory in Lincolnshire, between Lincoln and Peterborough.
- 69 *Spicilegium Solesmense*, ed. J. B. Pitra, 4 vols (Paris 1852–8), iii, p. 233, and cf. iii, p. 625, where Pitra cites (and in one instance translates into Latin) his correspondence with the antiquaries Paul Marchegay, Sir Francis Palgrave, Cosmo Innes and Albert Way.
- 70 Delisle, in *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes* xvii (1856), p. 536; xviii (1857), pp. 80–5. By the time that he came to compile his own edition of the charters of Henry II, Delisle seems to have forgotten the reference from Pitra, although remaining convinced of the existence of a royal signet, or perhaps of several such signets: Delisle, *Introduction*, p. 237.
- 71 Tout, *Charters*, i, p. 147, although admitting the likelihood that Henry II had some sort of privy seal, similar perhaps to the seal of Philip Augustus, distinct from Philip's great seal. That Richard I is said to have seized at Fréteval in 1194. Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, p. 23 n., cites the reference to Pitra by Tout, but seems to confuse the seal, as noticed by Pitra, with another noticed by J. Boussard, *Le Gouvernement d'Henri II Plantagenêt* (Paris, 1956), p. 347 n. 1, and cf. p. 548, whence G. Tessier, *Diplomatique royale française* (Paris 1962), p. 295, n. 3. Boussard sought to identify this latter seal, attached to a charter of Alice de Courcy, showing an eagle with legend SIGILL<VM S>ECRETI, as the secret or small seal of Henry II, which he suggested was in the custody of Alice's husband, Warin fitz Gerald, as royal chamberlain before his death c. 1158. In reality, Alice de Courcy was the wife not of the Warin fitz Gerald who died in the 1150s but of his son, born c. 1167–d. 1215/16. The seal is Alice's and has nothing to do with the King's, a conclusion reached independently, and on other grounds, in a review of Tessier's book by Chaplais, in *English Historical Review* lxxx (1965), 343–4.
- 72 Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine ms. 3475 fo. 35v, here deriving its ideas of the triumph or 'trophaeum' from some such source as Isidore 'Etymologies' xviii.2 (*Isidori hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford 1911), ii, 18.2, sections 1–7), and

- for 'currus', see *ibid.* xviii., 25 (ed. Lindsay, ii, 18.35 sections 1–2).
- 73 T.A. Heslop, 'The Seals of the Twelfth-Century Earls of Chester', in *The Earldom of Chester and its Charters: A Tribute to Geoffrey Barraclough*, ed. A.T. Thacker, *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society* lxxi (Chester 1991), 188–9 and pl. 6, from an original charter destroyed in 1879, whence *The Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester, c. 1071–1237*, ed. G. Barraclough, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire 126 (1988), 189–90, no. 184.
- 74 Dalas, *Sceaux des rois*, p. 148, no. 68.
- 75 *ibid.*, p. 149, no. 69, noting at least eight examples of its use. The use of Diana here is instructive. It raises a query, first drawn to my attention by Adrian Ailes, as to whether the counterseal of the English Exchequer baron, Nigel bishop of Ely, is in fact of a male figure with staff and sheep, or rather of Diana with bow and deer, see below n. 85.
- 76 *Spicilegium Solesmense*, ed. Pitra, iii, p. 625.
- 77 For John's counterseal, which may or may not be synonymous with the *paruum* or *pruatum sigillum* mentioned subsequently during his time as King, see *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals*, ed. L. C. Loyd and D. M. Stenton (Oxford 1950) [hereafter *Hatton's Seals*], no. 82; Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, pp. 337–8, nos 6323–7; Crouch, *Image of Aristocracy*, p. 245, n. 53; A. Ailes, 'The Seal of John, Lord of Ireland and Count of Mortain', *The Coat of Arms*, n.s. iv (1981), 341 (suggesting a female rather than a male figure). For a similar antique intaglio, showing an imperial bust facing to the right, legend ...E.LEGE:A TEGE., used as the counterseal of Hamelin earl of Warenne, Henry II's bastard half-brother, see Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, 336 no. 6319, from BL Harley Charter 43.C.14.
- 78 Gerald of Wales, 'De Principis Instructione', in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, viii, pp. 301–2, 309, and for the circulation of the Mélusine legend within the Plantagenet domain, see J. Le Goff, 'Mélusine maternelle et défricheuse', *Annales* xxv (1971), 587–603, reprinted in Le Goff, *Pour un autre Moyen Age* (Paris 1977), pp. 307–31.
- 79 Benoît de Sainte-Maure, *Le Roman de Troie*, ed. E. Baumgartner and F. Viellard (Paris 1998), pp. 70–1 ff., esp. p. 70, ll.1217–22: *Mout sot d'engin, de maïstrie, de conjure, de sorcerie ... Astronomie et nigromance sot tote par cuer dé s'enfance.*
- 80 *ibid.*, esp. pp. 90–2, ll.1677–1702, p. 102, ll.1929–32, p. 106, ll.2030–42, at p. 636 noting that Benoît clearly had access to both Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 7 (where Medea's chariot features prominently) and to Ovid, *Heroides*, 12 (Medea's fictitious letter to Jason). Ovid's portrait of Medea in *Metamorphoses*, 7, was perhaps known to Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 250–1, 310–11.
- 81 *Letters of Henry II*, nos 188, 1002, 1020, and cf. no. 843n.
- 82 *ibid.*, no. 1002, where Nicholas appears together with his brother William as heir to their father Roger.
- 83 Above n. 61.
- 84 Cambridge, St John's College Archives D19.142, a grant of property by *Laurentius domini re(gis) de s(c)accar(io) hostiarius*, witnessed by William of Ely as King's treasurer *et ceteris baronibus de scaccar(io)*. Small vesica-shaped seal in green wax, a standing figure in left-facing profile, carrying a round object in its right hand and an indeterminate ?weapon in its left, legend: SIGILL' <LA>URENTII FIL' GALFRID<I +>.
- 85 M. Henig, 'Archbishop Hubert Walter's Gems', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* cxxxvi (1983), 56–63, esp. pp. 57–8; *EEA* ii, p.1 (suggesting Mercury); F. Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London 1986), pl. 1 (suggesting Mercury, Mars or Perseus), and for many further examples, see C. Roach Smith, 'Medieval Seals Set With Ancient Gems', in Roach Smith, *Collectanea Antiqua*, 7 vols (London 1848–80), iv (1857), pp. 65–79 and pls xviii–xx; G. Demay, *Inventaire des sceaux de l'Artois de la Picardie* (Paris 1877), pp. iii–xxiv; W. Greenwell and C. H. Blair, *Catalogue of the Seals in the Treasury of the Dean and Chapter of Durham*, 2 vols (Newcastle 1921), i, pp. l–liii; *EEA* viii, pp. lxxx–i; *EEA* xxxi, pp. cxlvi–vii (Nigel of Ely's classical counterseal, identified for me by Sandy Heslop and John Mitchell as an Arcadian scene of male figure, sacred pillar, staff and grazing animal, apparently reinterpreted as the good shepherd. For an alternative identification, as Diana with bow and deer, see above n. 75); Henig, 'The Re-use and Copying of Ancient Intaglios', pp. 25–34. Richard fitz Nigel employed a counterseal of St Paul, perhaps in use during his years as treasurer as well as his time as bishop of London: R.L. Poole, *The Exchequer in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford 1922), p. 8, n. 2, noting the counterseal on a document printed in *EEA* xxvi, no.7, but there without notice of the counterseal.
- 86 Roach Smith, 'Medieval Seals', p. 72, and cf. M. Lovatt in *EEA* xx, p. lxvi
- 87 Gerald, 'Vita Galfridi', in Gerald, *Opera*, iv, p. 372.
- 88 *ibid.*, iv, 371, also referring to a precious sapphire ring that the King ordered be given to Geoffrey himself.

- 89 L.F. Salzman *Henry II* (London 1914), 173.
- 90 Geoffrey of Vigeois, in *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. M. Bouquet and others, 24 vols, (Paris, 1738–1904), xviii, p. 220: *Epistolam rex moriens patri transmisit, sigillo suo et annulo superius memorato signatam*.
- 91 See, for example, H. S. London *Royal Beasts* (Heraldry Society 1956), pp. 9–10; A. Ailes, *The Origins of the Royal Arms of England: Their Development to 1199* (Reading 1982).
- 92 Isidore, 'Etymologies', xii.2, ed. Lindsay, ii, 12.2 sections 8–9. The entry on the panther in *Roberti Crikeladensis Defloratio Naturalis Historie Plinii Secundi*, ed. B. Nāf (Bern 2002), pp. 173–4, a digest of Pliny dedicated to Henry II, is disappointingly thin.
- 93 Isidore, 'Etymologies': viii. 42, xii. 2.
- 94 Ailes, *Origin of the Royal Arms*, p. 47, and cf. John of Marmoutier, in *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou*, ed. L. Halphen and R. Poupardin (Paris 1913), p. 179, commenting on the ceremonial reception by Henry I of Geoffrey at Rouen in 1127, that he was clothed in sandals decorated with 'leunculos aureos' and supplied with a shield to hang around his neck: '*clipeus, leunculos aureos ymaginarios habens, collo eius suspenditur*', and cf. p. 201, remarking again on Geoffrey's arms, '*pictos leones preferens in clipeo, veris leonibus nulla erat inferior feritudo*'. A similar shield with lion rampant appears in the opening illustration to the mid s.xii copy of Pliny's 'Natural History', now Le Mans, Bibliothèque Municipale ms.263, heavily decorated with purple, which may or may not imply a royal provenance. See here P. Stirnemann and A. Ritz-Guilbert, 'Cultural Confrontations', in *Under the Influence: The Concept of Influence and the Study of Illuminated Manuscripts*, ed. J. Lowden and A. Bovey (Turnhout 2007), pp. 65–7, 206.
- 95 *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste, roi de France*, ed. H.-F. Delaborde, M. Nortier and others, 6 vols (Paris 1916–), vi, pp. 51–2, nos 24–5, where Henry is given the nicknames *rufus* and *vulpecula*. For his ruddy colouring, see Peter of Blois, Letter 66, in *Petri Blesensis Bathoniensis archidiaconi Opera Omnia*, ed. J. A. Giles, 4 vols (Oxford 1846–7), i, pp. 192–7, esp. p. 193, *dominum regem subrufum hactenus extitisse*, noting that King David himself was described as *rufus* (1 Reg. 16:12 and 17:42).
- 96 Gerald, 'De Principis Instructione', in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, viii, pp. 320–1, as noticed by A. Ailes, 'Heraldry in Medieval England: Symbols of Politics and Propaganda', *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. P. Coss and M. Keen (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 85.
- 97 H. Cam, 'An East Anglian Shire-Moot of Stephen's Reign, 1148–53', *English Historical Review* 39 (1924), pp. 568–71, esp. p. 570, as drawn to my attention by Hugh Doherty. For the purported grant by Henry II to Baldric fitz Gilbert, keeper of the King's gaol at Rouen, before 1162, of what may have been an annual livery of a shield (*unum scutum in redditu scutorum meorum Rothomagi per manum turrensis mei*), see *Letters of Henry II*, no. 954.
- 98 D. Crouch, 'The Court of Henry II of England in the 1180s, and the Office of King of Arms', *The Coat of Arms*, 3rd ser. 5 (2010); Vincent, 'The Court', p. 324.
- 99 J. Cherry and J. Goodall, 'A Twelfth-Century Gold Brooch from Folkingham Castle, Lincolnshire', *Antiquaries Journal* lxx (1985), 471–2; D.A. Hinton, *Gold and Gilt, Pots and Pins: Possessions and People in Medieval Britain* (Oxford 2005), pp. 192–3.
- 100 Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H. R. Luard, 7 vols (London 1872–83), iii, p. 324 (sub 1235): *Misit ergo imperator regi Anglorum tres leopardos in signum regalis clipei in quo tres leopardi transeuntes figurantur*. Two of these beasts were apparently sent to hunt in the King's forest as late as 1237: *Calendar of Liberate Rolls 1226–40*, p. 287.
- 101 For the King's 1251 Christmas robes *cum tribus parvis leopardis in parte anteriori et aliis tribus in parte posteriori*, see *Close Rolls 1251–3*, p. 14, as drawn to my attention by Lars Kjaer. For Paris' attempts to represent the arms of kings William I, William II, Henry I, Stephen, Henry II and Henry the Young King, in each case as three gold lions (or leopards) passant, following on from the supposed arms of Harold, a lion rampant, see 'The Matthew Paris Shields c. 1244–59', ed. T. D. Tremlett, in *Aspilogia II: Rolls of Arms Henry III*, ed. A. Wagner (London 1967), pp. 11–14, nos 1–5, 10–11, 13–14, 17–19.
- 102 Burghley House, Marquess of Exeter ms. Muniments ExB 76/80: Sealed *sur double queue* on white silk cords, single-sided seal impression in natural wax varnished reddish brown, 65mm. diameter, an equestrian figure facing to the right with helmet, shield and sword (in right hand), much rubbed, faint traces of a rampant leopard or lion on the shield and perhaps also on the rump of the horse's coat, legend rubbed and partially illegible: SIGI.<LLUM WILLELMI FILII IMPER>ATRICIS.
- 103 F. M. Stenton, *Facsimiles of Early Charters from Northamptonshire Collections*, Northamptonshire Record Society 4 (1930), 24–6, no. 6; *Hatton's Seals*, pp. 299–300 no. 429; London, College of Arms ms. Glover A fo. 132r (from a lost original), this charter and its seal noticed

- from Glover by J. R. Planché, in *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* xii (1856), 100–2 and plate; *Heralds' Commemorative Exhibition 1484–1934 Held at the College of Arms* (London 1936), p. 69, no. 99 (also noting the seal at Burghley), and from a slightly later copy of Glover's drawing, by W. Smith Ellis, *The Antiquities of Heraldry* (London 1869), p. 184.
- 104 As noted by N. Rogers, 'The Shrine of St Mengold at Huy and its Heraldic Importance', *The Coat of Arms* n.s. v no. 127 (1983), 177.
- 105 Ailes, 'The Seal of John', 341–50, at p. 343 suggesting 1185 as the date of its introduction.
- 106 For particularly clear impressions of the three lions on the shield of the equestrian side of King John's seal, see London, The National Archives DL 10/52, 58.
- 107 *Letters of Henry II*, no. 2715 A¹.
- 108 Bedos, *Sceaux des villes*, p. 441, no. 590, reproduced on the front and rear covers to *Records, Administration and Aristocratic Society in the Anglo-Norman Realm*, ed. N. Vincent (Woodbridge 2009). For the second seal of Rouen, showing an even more magnificent lion, used to seal the surrender of the city to Philip Augustus in 1204, the matrix itself still extant, see Bedos, *Sceaux des villes*, pp. 442–3, no. 591.
- 109 Cf. *Letters of Henry II*, no. 2278.
- 110 Cf. *Letters of Henry II*, nos 50, 2221. For castles, towers or battlements, often combined with the lions or leopards of England, see for example Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, nos 4664, 4679, 4782, 4825, 4919, 4950, 5062, 5068, 5177, 5193, 5217–27, 5234, 5241, 5331, 5380, 5432, 5510, 5542–3.
- 111 Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, nos 4584, 4587, 4705, 4852, 4993, 5031 (Hull, showing Edward I trampling a lion), 5064, 5392.
- 112 Bedos, *Sceaux des villes*, 54–5 nos 36–7, 435–8 nos 582–4.
- 113 *Letters of Henry II*, no. 2748; Bedos, *Sceaux des villes*, p. 520 no. 714, and cf. the seal of the men of Eu, and from much further south, the very impressive lion counterseal in use by the men of Bayonne by the 1290s, *ibid.*, 94 no. 85 bis, 229 no. 269 bis. No impression of the seal of Caen survives earlier than 1600, or of Avranches and Bayeux before the s.xviii: Demay, *Inventaire des sceaux de la Normandie*, pp. 166–7, nos 1631–2, 1635.
- 114 The seal survives in a unique impression, round green wax, 45mm. diameter, legend: +SIGILL[P]REPOSI[T]UR[DE]NORHAMT[ON], attached to letters of the *balliui domini reg(is) de Norb[et]* addressed to the sheriff and bailiffs of Lancaster, dispatching a copy of an undated charter of King John granting privileges to the burgesses of Northampton including the election of two of their own number to have custody of the *prepositura* of the vill, known from other sources to have been issued on 17 April 1200, the Lancaster copy apparently issued before the death of King John in 1216. John's charter, however, merely confirms privileges already granted by Richard I by a charter of 18 November 1189, allowing for a single elected *prepositus* rather than the two envisaged by John: Preston, Lancashire Record Office Lancaster City Charters 3, and for the Northampton charters, see *The Records of the Borough of Northampton*, ed. C. A. Markham, i (1898), 25–33. The royal reeves of Northampton were already operating in the time of Henry II, being addressed in a royal mandate issued 1155 X 1157: *Letters of Henry II*, no. 1938.
- 115 M. M. Archibald, 'The Lion Coinage of Robert Earl of Gloucester and William Earl of Gloucester', *British Numismatic Journal* lxxi (2002), 71–86, and pls 6 and 7, from a hoard first found in Wiltshire in 1993–4, as drawn to my attention by Henry Fairbairn. For a very similar (and similarly magnificent) lion, painted in oil colours on a linen seal bag, or on gules, attached to letters patent of Edward I, 5 November 1281, see the facsimile in F. Palgrave, *The Antient Kalendars and Inventories of the Treasury of His Majesty's Exchequer*, 3 vols (London 1836), i, pp. cxxxvii–viii, cxlviii, and pl. 5.
- 116 *Earldom of Gloucester Charters*, ed. R. B. Patterson (Oxford 1973), p. 24 and pl. xxxi a–b, with counterseal a helmeted bust facing to the left between two figures of Nike, an eagle below rising regardant between two standards, legend: +AQVILA SV[er] ET CVSTOS COMITIS, itself later adapted as the counterseal of the countess Isabella, William's daughter. Archibald ('Lion Coinage', 73) identifies the branch behind the lion of William's seal as the rod of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1), and suggests that the matrix of earl William's seal had simply been recut from that originally made for earl Robert, for which tradition see Nieus, 'L'Hérédité des matrices de sceaux', pp. 217–39.
- 117 This interpretation, shared with Adrian Ailes, *Origins of the Royal Arms*, esp. p. 47, is disputed by Brigitte Bedos Rezak reviewing Ailes, in *Speculum* lx (1985), 373–6. Bedos Rezak suggests that the lion was derived from the counts of Anjou rather than from Henry I, and that the testimony of authorities such as John of Marmoutier, writing thirty years after the events they describe, cannot be trusted for events of the 1120s.

- 118 For Geoffrey fitz Peter, see Oxford, New College Muniments 13019 (Takeley Charter 156), with round seal impression in natural wax, showing a lion passant with long trailing tail, legend defaced (?1198 X 1199), and cf. Westminster Abbey Muniments 3564, apparently the same seal but here with the lion holding a creature, perhaps a deer under its right front leg, with counterseal of a six-petalled flower, distinct from Geoffrey's equestrian seal and counterseal (also a six-petalled flower) as earl of Essex, *ibid.* 3775. For Brice the Chamberlain, with title as seneschal of Anjou, see the charter and drawing of its seal reproduced by Roger Gaignières in BN ms. Latin 5480 part 1 pp. 71–2, from a lost original, double sided seal impression: obverse, round, a shield charged with two lions passant facing to the left, the shield bordered by what appear to be eight lions' heads, legend +S.....AN; counterseal, small oval, a single lion passant, SIGILLUM BRI..... For further, later examples, see A. Ailes, 'Powerful Impressions: Symbols of Office and Authority on Secular Seals', in J. Cherry and A. Payne (eds), *Signs and Symbols: Proceedings of the 2006 Harlaxton Symposium*, (Stamford, 2009), p. 20.
- 119 BN ms. Latin 5480 part 1 p. 257, a drawing by Gaignières from a charter of 1181 granting the nuns of Fontevraud an annual rent of 1 mark in *Anglia meo schecario*, showing all of these lions facing to the left, the equestrian side legend +SIGILL' BERNARDI DE SANCTO WALERICO, the counterseal legend +SECRETUM BERNARDI, with facsimile in Bony, *Un Siècle de sceaux figurés*, pl. xlii no. 277, and cf. *Oxford Charters*, ed. Salter, no. 81. See Bony, *Un Siècle de sceaux figurés*, pl. xxvi, no. 169 for the seal of Reginald de St-Valery, his father, with deviceless shield but a counterseal of a single lion passant, from a drawing by Gaignières in BN ms. Latin 5480 part 1 p. 259. Cf. the seal of Thomas de St-Valery (1208), equestrian with shield of two lions passant, described by the Marquis de Belleval, *Les Sceaux du Ponthieu* (Paris, 1896), p. 262, no. 696 and pl. ix, with an original exemplar surviving as Oxford, Magdalen College Archives Harwell Charter 20, and cf. *Oxford Charters*, ed. Salter, no. 93. The seal of Fulk Paine of Bampton, attached to TNA DL 27/28 and 81, shows a pair of lions passant facing to the right: R.H. Ellis, *Catalogue of Seals in the Public Record Office: Personal Seals*, 2 vols (London 1978–81) ii, p. 82, no. P1853 and pl. 23.
- 120 For Richard de Canville, see BL Additional Charter 28326, with a fragmentary round seal impression in white wax, an animal with head twisted back along its back (1156 X 1162). For Ralph fitz Stephen, BL Lord Frederick Campbell Charter XXIII.20, small oval seal impression in green wax, a ?cat or other animal passant, legend: SIGILL' RADULFI.... (temp. Henry II).
- 121 For the seal of William, showing a mitred figure riding on the back of a lion passant, using the lion's mouth as a bit and bridle, the lion's left front paw pointing forwards to the right, legend +SIGILLVM WILLELMI ARCHIEPISCOPI, see the drawing by Gaignières in BN ms. Latin 5480 part 1 p. 357, dated by Eygun, *Sigillographie du Poitou*, p. 236, no. 532, and plate lviii no. 532 to the time of William V (c. 1170 X 1187), and cf. the similar seal adopted by Hugh I l'Archévêque (before 1216), *ibid.*, p. 236, no. 533 and pl. xviii. For further examples, see the cases of Roger de Berkeley (BL Seal Cast xciv.51), Geoffrey Clinton (*Oxford Charters*, no. 71), and, from a later date, Roger de Quincy earl of Winchester (d. 1264) (Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, nos 6346–52), itself recut from the counterseal that his father, Saher de Quincy, had adopted after his promotion as earl of Winchester during the reign of King John, as in Oxford, Magdalen College Archives Brackley Charter A22, with legend DOMINE COMENDO SPIRITVM MEVM, changed by earl Roger (*Ibid.* Brackley Charter D247) to read SIGILL' ROGERI DE QVIN<CI CONST>ABVLARII SCOTIE.
- 122 For the seal of William de Hauville, son of Henry II's chief falconer Ralph de Hauville and a member of the King's hunting establishment in the 1160s and 1170s, see Chelmsford, Essex Record Office D/DRu T1/9, with a photograph by J.S.A. Macaulay, 'Colchester Hall (Takeley) Charters', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society* n.s. xxii (1940), plate facing p. 74, and cf. Dugdale, *Monasticon*, iv, pp. 609–10, no. 3. For the seal of Stephen de Marçay, attached to a charter in which Stephen describes himself as *domini Henr(ici) regis Anglie senescallus Andegauen'*, the equestrian image facing to the left, legend +SIGILLVM STEPHANI DE MARTHAIO SENESCAL', see the drawing by Gaignières in BN ms. Latin 5441 part 2 p. 448.
- 123 Two surviving examples of seal and counterseal, both attached to charters in Northampton, Northamptonshire Record Office Montagu of Boughton Box 7 nos 3/4 and 3/6. The seal itself is round (55mm diameter), showing a bare headed figure on horseback in a long flowing cape, riding to the left, foot in the stirrup, his right hand holding the reins, his left arm outstretched behind him with a hawk

- on his glove, legend: +SIGILL:WILLELMI: OSTRICARI:REGIS:HENRICI. For William, see *Letters of Henry II*, no. 2831.
- 124 Attached to BL Lord Frederick Campbell Charter XIV.24, vesica shaped in white wax, a pike, legend illegible, reproduced in facsimile in *Facsimiles of Royal and Other Charters in the British Museum*, ed. G.F. Warner and H.J. Ellis (London 1903), no. 34 and pl. xxii, and cf. Birch, *Catalogue*, iii, p. 210, no. 11439, which claims to read the legend as +SIGILLVM RICARDI DE LV....V...A.... There is a further drawing of a lost impression, without legend, in Oxford, Bodleian Library ms. Dugdale 18 fo.41v. For the same pun, used as the basis for the seal of the men of Lucheux (Somme, cant. Douliens), see Bedos, *Seeaux des villes*, p. 293, no. 371. Not surprisingly, and on the same basis, William Herring is found c. 1180 using a herring as the device on his seal, attached to TNA DL 27/53, whence Ellis, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 56, no. P1551 and pl. 18.
- 125 Neckham, *De Naturis Rerum*, cc. 32–3 (ed. Wright, 147–8): *Lucius, qui et lupus aquaticus dicitur, in aquis tyrannidem exercens, popularium piscium populator est. Senecias eius quis enadet? Ipse nempe a sui dominatione quam inter pisces exercet, senes senecis dicitur. Unde et fances eius dicuntur senecie. Inuidus igitur qui aliorum successibus tabet, senecias comedere dicitur, pre nimia sui anxietate*. Although Neckham in part derives his account from Pliny and Isidore on the fish named ‘lupus’ (Isidore, ‘Etymologies’ xii.6, ed. Lindsay, ii, 12.6 sections 5, 23–4: *et lupi quod improba voracitate alios persequantur ... lupum, ut dictum est, audivit appellavit, piscem in captura ingeniosum*), Pliny and Isidore’s ‘lupus’ is not necessarily a pike. The most recent Loeb translation of Pliny (*Historia Naturalis* 9:74 c.162, and 9.88 c.185) suggests ‘bass’ or ‘sea-bass’: Pliny, *Natural History III: Books 8–11*, trans. H. Rackham, 2nd ed. (Cambridge Mass. 1983), 273, 287.
- 126 *Battle Chronicle*, 214–15, *quod regibus et precipuis tantum competit personis*.
- 127 London, College of Arms ms. Vincent 88 p. 120, copy by Augustine Vincent (d. 1626) from a lost original relating to Richard’s rights at Stowmarket. That the words *de iuris pace* did indeed appear on Richard’s seal is to some extent supported by Richard’s funerary monument at Lesnes Abbey in Kent, where his memorial is said to have carried the inscription: *Rapitur in tenebras Richardus lux Luciorum, iusticie pacis dilector et vrbis honorum*, as reported by John Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (London 1631), 336, with an account of the discovery of Richard’s effigy at pp. 777–8 (2nd ed. by W. Tooke (London 1767), 129, 509), and cf. W. Stukeley, ‘Account of Lesnes Abbey’, *Archaeologia* i (1804), 52.
- 128 The *Oxford English Dictionary*, sub ‘pike’, records the Middle English form only from 1314. However, the related word ‘pickerel’, meaning a small or immature pike, occurs in Latin (*pikerellus*) from at least as early as the 1250s, probably from much earlier.
- 129 Birch, *Catalogue*, i, 353 nos 2245–6; *EEA*, viii, p.lxxxii, legend: +PRESVLIS 7 GENERIS SIGNO CONSIGNOR VTROQ’, with a fine impression still attached to Winchester College Muniments 10631.
- 130 The seals of Thurstan fitz Simon (before 1191) and Aimery Dispenser his son are attached to Oxford, Brasenose College Muniments, Rollright Charters nos 8, 40, as described in *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, ed. H. E. Salter (Oxford Historical Society lxxxix–xci, xcvi–viii, ci (1929–36)), vi, pp. 141–2, nos 1061, 1063, noticed by N. Vincent, *The Lucys of Charlecote: The Invention of a Warwickshire Family 1170–1302*, Dugdale Society Occasional Papers xlii (Stratford, 2002), 6.
- 131 Robert’s seal is attached to TNA DL 27/50, whence the description by Ellis, *Catalogue*, 9 no. P1013 and pl. 4. It is very similar to that of his nephew and fellow courtier, Master Michael Belet, butler to the court of King John, attached to BL ms. Harley Charter 45.H.45, whence *Hatton’s Seals*, pp. 104–5, no. 147. For commentary here, see Vincent, ‘The Court’, pp. 300–1, 329, acknowledging a phenomenon first drawn to my attention by Adrian Ailes.
- 132 The seal impression is attached to Stafford, Staffordshire Record Office D798/1/1/1, round green wax, 40mm. diameter, legend +SIG.....TOME..... For an earlier example, see the seal of Robert Grimbald, sheriff of Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire in the early 1150s, drawn by Dugdale and apparently showing Robert seated on a throne or chair with a sword held upright in his right hand with a broken sword in his left, legend +SIGILLVM ROBERTI GRIMBALD, see Dugdale, *Monasticon*, vi, 424–5 no. 7, as drawn to my attention by Hugh Doherty.
- 133 Attached to Keele University Library ms. Sneyd 739, oval, green wax, only the left hand side surviving, legendBA<SS>ETI, whence *Facsimiles of Early Cheshire Charters*, ed. G. Barraclough (Oxford 1957), 13–14 and pl. 5(2), where the charter is misattributed to Thomas’s son, Thomas the Younger (d. 1220). For the elder Thomas’ more conventional equestrian seal, attached to London, TNA E

- 40/4612 and E 40/4828, see *Basset Charters c. 1120 to 1250*, ed. W. T. Reedy (Pipe Roll Society n.s. 50 (1995)), pp. 114–16, nos 177–8.
- 134 *Oxford Charters*, ed. Salter, nos 43, 86 (with facsimile from Oxford, Merton College Muniments 2545), although for a standard equestrian seal used by Henry d'Oilly I, see *ibid.*, nos 73, 75.
- 135 From a charter printed in *Rufford Charters*, ed. C. J. Holdsworth, 4 vols., Thoroton Society Record Series 29, 30, 32, 34 (1972–81), ii, 413–14 no. 768 (1175 X 1181), with another seal of the same Osbert noticed at iii, 437–8 no. 822, 440–1 no. 826, 446 no. 837, device a quatrefoil, with legend +S' OSBERTI DE CHAPELE AGRTOA. Against the possibility that the first seal was that of Emma, Osbert's wife, joint grantor of the charter to which it is appended, see Emma's seal attached to *ibid.*, iii, 447 no. 839, a fleur de lys with legend SIGILL' EMME FILIE ANGOTI. For Osbert as King's clerk, see *Letters of Henry II*, nos 1889, 1993.
- 136 Attached to charters of Combwell Priory, now London, College of Arms, Combwell Charters nos 40, 66, 94, 98, 106. For a description from a cast, misreporting the legend as DEVS SALVET CUI TE MITTO, see Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 361, no. 6488.
- 137 'Charters of Combwell Priory', *Archaeologia Cantiana* v (1863), 206, 208, and cf. Vincent, 'The Court', p. 332.
- 138 Vincent, 'The Court', pp. 332–4.
- 139 Beaune, *Birth of Ideology*, passim, esp. p. 202 for the counterseal, for which see also Dalas, *Sceaux des rois*, 149n., 150 no. 70 bis, and for Gerald, above n. 96. Note also the way in which the document acknowledging the surrender of Rouen to Philip Augustus in 1204 is itself sealed with the magnificent second version of the city's lion seal, first awarded under Plantagenet rule, but set with a counterseal of a fleurs de lys: Bedos, *Sceaux des villes*, pp. 442–3, no. 591–591 bis, from a surviving matrix still in Rouen.
- 140 See Birch, *Catalogue*, vi, pp. 619–20, nos 23025–30, noting the castle on the leaden seal of Alfonso VIII of Castile (1186), now BL ms. Additional Charter 24803, and the castle and lion rampant on the leaden seal of Alfonso X of Castile/Leon (1254), now BL Additional Charter 24804. As pointed out to me by Olga Mendez Gonzalez, by the 1180s King Fernando II of León was authenticating his charters with a monogram drawing of a lion gardant.
- 141 Birch, *Catalogue*, iv, pp. 2–7, nos 14769–88, from the time of Alexander I onwards.
- 142 R. Turvey, 'The Death and Burial of an Excommunicate Prince: The Lord Rhys and the Cathedral Church of St David's', *Journal of the Pembroke Shire Historical Society* viii (1998–9), 5–26.
- 143 London, College of Arms ms. Vincent 53, p. 45, a single paper sheet, on the back blank save (in the same hand): 'releses of the countes (i.e. the countess) of Shrewesby'. On the recto, transcripts and abstracts c. 1600 of various Talbot charters, s.xiii/xiv, followed by a description apparently of two distinct seals, as below n. 145.
- 144 Turvey, 'Death and Burial', 13–20.
- 145 'Resius the sonne of Griffyn prynce of Southwales in greene waxxe, a man of armes armed in male about the which was wrytten SIGILL' RESI FILII GRIFINI PRINCIPIIS SUDWALLIAE. In greene waxxe a horse passant his mayne and tayle caryed with the wynd about the which was wrytten SECRETUM RESI'.
- 146 Gerald, 'Topographica Hibernica', III. 25, in *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, v, p. 169, and cf. E. FitzPatrick, *Royal Inauguration in Gaelic Ireland c. 1100–1600: A Cultural and Landscape Study* (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 25ff.

The declaration on the Norman Church (1205): a study in Norman sigillography¹

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In June 1204, King Philip Augustus of France completed his subjugation of Normandy and overthrew the so-called 'Anglo-Norman realm', following the flight overseas of the duke of Normandy, King John of England, the previous year. All landowners in the duchy were ordered to do homage to the king of France by Easter (10 April) 1205 or else suffer confiscation of their Norman lands. Several months after the deadline, on Sunday 13 November 1205, a great gathering of surviving members of the Norman aristocracy at Rouen issued a proclamation concerning the traditional rights of the ruler of Normandy over the clergy. The document recording this declaration survives in the Archives Nationales in Paris and forms the subject of this article, especially its fine and unusual collection of seals and its curious method of sealing.²

This study first considers the history of seals in Normandy before 1205, before briefly outlining the context for the declaration on the Norman clergy. It then describes the seals themselves in detail and considers their place within the history of Norman seals. It thereby sets out the history of Norman aristocratic seals in the Anglo-Norman and early Capetian periods and shows their diplomatic and political significance at the time of the transition from Angevin to Capetian rule.

1. Seals in Normandy: origins, uses and practices

Early Norman seals have received substantial historical attention since Germain Demay's *Inventaire des Sceaux de la Normandie*, and specific collections have been examined and sometimes catalogued, such as the fine collection of nearly 200 seals from the muniments of the Cistercian abbey of La Noë near Évreux, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, most of which belonged to very minor local landowners.³ Nevertheless, some other collections remain neglected, notably the magnificent series for the much more famous abbey of Savigny, which survive mainly in the Archives Nationales and the Bibliothèque Municipale in Rouen.⁴ The subject still lacks a comprehensive overview: Norman seals have not been subjected to the sort of quantitative analysis that Brigitte Bedos-Rezak and Nicolas Civel have executed for Picardy and the Île-de-France, for instance.⁵ Moreover, an important recent consideration of Norman seals as a group by Maïté Billoré remains unpublished: it contains a short thematic and statistical analysis as well an inventory and reproductions of about eight hundred twelfth- and thirteenth-century Norman seals from the national collections in Paris and the departmental archives of Seine-

Maritime, Calvados, and Eure.⁶ Norman seals have more often been considered either in a broader French context,⁷ or within an Anglo-Norman framework⁸ – with good reason, since many Norman sigillants were also landowners in England. Indeed, much of what has been written about the design and function of British seals holds good for Norman seals as well.

There is some slight circumstantial evidence for seals in Normandy before 1066, when seals were becoming popular in some other parts of Northern France;⁹ but it was in the wake of the Norman Conquest of England that the seal appears to have been brought across the sea to the duchy as a means of authentication or confirmation, no doubt influenced by the Conqueror's rapid adoption of the Anglo-Saxon sealed writ.¹⁰ Sealing soon became a popular form of validating acts: Emily Zack Tabuteau lists sealing clauses in acts before 1107 not only of the kings of England and dukes of Normandy but also of counts, viscounts, archbishops, bishops, and men of humbler status.¹¹ Although some of these references may not be authentic and a few should certainly be redated to a later period,¹² it is clear that the seal was gaining in popularity in Normandy by the early twelfth century, much as it was more generally across Northern France. Nevertheless, given the diversity of diplomatic forms such as *pancartes*, *chartes-notices*, and diplomas, many acts remained unsealed,¹³ and it was only after 1150 that the seal became an essential feature of Norman charters. In 1151, an act of Gilbert de Say in favour of the abbey of Aunay contained both a seal and *signa*, as did a slightly later act of Geoffrey III de Mandeville, earl of Essex.¹⁴ Yet in 1153, William II de Roumare, earl of Lincoln, issued a writ-charter addressed to the archbishop of Rouen that had *ex parte* witnesses and a seal but no *signa*.¹⁵ Thereafter the sealed charter rapidly displaced older diplomatic forms, and *signa* vanished as modes of assurance before the end of the reign of Henry II (duke 1149/50–1189).¹⁶ The lateness of this development bears comparison with other parts of France, where similarly the late twelfth century, not earlier, was the main period when seals began to be used.¹⁷

From then on the sealing clause became a standard feature of Norman diplomatic, although not every act bearing a seal mentioned

that fact in the text. As in England and elsewhere in Northern France, most Norman acts in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries were sealed *sur double queue*, usually with a *plica* or lower edge folded over for strength, and with the seal attached either by parchment (or occasionally leather) tags or by silk or woollen cords. Aristocratic acts were occasionally sealed *sur simple queue*, without a fold and with the seal impressed upon a tongue of parchment protruding from the main body of the act. Multiple sealing, rare at first,¹⁸ became more common in the second half of the twelfth century, normally with a hierarchy of importance working from left to right.¹⁹

The majority of sealed charters must have been produced by their ecclesiastical beneficiaries, but there are signs of aristocratic 'chanceries' in the twelfth century,²⁰ and a good number of contracts between lay parties from the late twelfth century onwards. As might be expected, most seals bore the name of the person issuing the act, but acts were frequently sealed by confirmatory authorities such as bishops or lords, whether or not their act of sealing was mentioned in the text. A statement in an act of Robert and Ralph de Gauville for the abbey of Aumale (c. 1165) is typical: 'since we did not have our own seal, we confirmed this grant with the seal of Robert the constable [of Aumale] and placed it sealed upon the altar'.²¹ Just as minor landowners increasingly issued their own acts in the late twelfth century, so, too, they increasingly sealed their own acts. In 1196 Robert de Rétonval confirmed the gifts of his father and grandfather to the abbey of Foucarmont, and sealed the act himself; significantly, however, his act claimed that his grandfather's grant had been recorded only in a sealed charter of his lord, Count John of Eu (d. 1170).²² Even so, seals were not necessarily used by the person whose name they bore: in an act of 1175, the three sons and wife of William Pantulf of Samesle stated that they had confirmed William's gifts by affixing his seal to their act; the seal is lost but the act bears a single sealing slit.²³ In addition, third-person notifications continued to be drafted and sealed on occasion until the end of the twelfth century.²⁴

One popular use of seals from the mid-twelfth century onwards was for bipartite chirographs. Fine early originals survive for the abbeys of Aumale and Almenêches

from c. 1150 and 1157 respectively,²⁵ and they grew in popularity thereafter.²⁶ Similar phrasing to English final concords was adopted for chirographs drawn up at the Norman exchequer by King John's reign, and while some final concords appear to have been unsealed,²⁷ there does not appear to have been a concerted move towards using unsealed tripartite concords as in England. On the contrary, in 1212, a final concord that had been drawn up at assizes in Normandy in 1199 for the division of a cross-Channel inheritance was rejected in the king's court at Westminster because it bore a seal, explicitly because this was contrary to English practice for final concords.²⁸ More often, the parties either sealed both halves of the chirograph, or sealed the half in their own name, or sealed each other's half.²⁹

Hence, after a hesitant start over the previous century, seals acquired a standardised purpose and function in Normandy under the Angevin dukes, and by the time of the fall of the Angevin régime in 1204, almost all Norman acts were sealed: if not as the sole means of authentication, then as the most popular means of strengthening an act's validity, both for ecclesiastical and for lay transactions. While exact sealing practices are rarely apparent, and the early Norman customs give no hints – in contrast, for instance, to the remarkably informative statements in Philippe de Beaumanoir's *Coutumes de Beauvaisis* (1283)³⁰ – charters occasionally give some indication of sealing conventions in Angevin and early Capetian Normandy. Around 1200 a clerk recorded that his father had resigned the patronage of the church of Feugerolles-sur-Orne to the priory of Le Plessis-Grimoult, but had died before he could seal the act of resignation: this shows that there was a clear delay between the father's oral ceremony and the son's sealing of the act.³¹ For male landowners, acquiring a seal was as much a feature of coming of age as the knighting ceremony was for knights, as can be seen in the record of a dispute waged in royal assizes in 1225 over the fief of Montgaroult near Argentan. In support of his claim to two thirds of the fief, the abbot of Saint-André-en-Gouffern produced several charters for the abbey from the predecessors of the rival claimant, Gervase de Joué, as well as a confirmatory charter which had been issued

by Gervase himself with his father and elder brother and which bore their seals. Gervase denied that he had confirmed the grant or sealed the charter: he retorted that if his father and brother had indeed issued this deed, it was at a time when he had not yet acquired a seal or come of age, and so the charter would have been made contrary to the uses and customs of Normandy.³² However, an inquest found that Gervase had already reached the age of twenty-one when the charter was made and sealed with three seals, and that he was one of the sigillants.³³ The inquest's verdict was correct, for the charter of Gervase, his father and brother survives today in the Archives du Calvados; regrettably, it has lost its seals.³⁴ After the verdict, a new record of the case was sealed by arbiters who negotiated a compromise between the abbot and Gervase de Joué.

Other acts indicate how grantors dealt with the loss of a seal. An aristocratic widow, Joanna du Breuil, notified Bishop Jordan of Lisieux (1201–18) that she had made gifts to the abbey of Saint-André-en-Gouffern after her husband's death and confirmed them with her charter, but she had lost her seal, as the bishop apparently already knew; she therefore implored him to protect her gifts against her sons.³⁵ On the borders of Normandy and Maine, a knight called Hamelin de l'Écluse granted customary rights to the monks of Savigny, and sealed the act with a new seal since he had lost his old one 'during the war', presumably one of the conflicts that had pitted his lord, Juhel de Mayenne, against King John in 1199 and 1202–03.³⁶ When sigillants altered their seals for some reason, it could undermine the authenticity of their earlier grants. The simplest solution, adopted by William de Semilly in 1236, was to issue a fresh act with the new seal.³⁷ A more complex solution was adopted by William de Husson in 1237. In 1223, he and his mother had granted grain renders in the diocese of Bayeux to Savigny, but soon after he had broken up his seal and replaced it with a new one. Now, in 1237, he wished to enlarge the grant to the abbey, and so he issued a new act, to which he transferred the old seal: he then added his new seal and publicly avowed that both seals were his, and for good measure he arranged for the rural dean of the Val de Mortain in the diocese of Avanches (where his chief estates lay) to seal the act as well.³⁸

2. Seals in Normandy: forms and designs

In contrast to their standardised function, twelfth- and thirteenth-century Norman seals varied enormously in their appearance, but these, too, were generally similar to those of seals in England or other parts of France. Their size, shape and designs were heavily influenced by the social status and function of the seal's owner, but no exact correlation between these features can be established. Unlike in English royal acts, or indeed French royal acts by the end of the reign of Philip Augustus, the colour of the wax used for Norman aristocratic seals does not appear to have been significant.

For the first few decades after the spread of lay seals, the most popular design for landowners were equestrian seals: these varied enormously in size and quality, and many were issued by very minor 'gentry' figures as well as magnates. Most equestrian seals were military in design, but a well-known exception for a family whose interests straddled Normandy, France and (eventually) England, were the series of seals issued by the lords of Montfort-l'Amaury, counts of Évreux and afterwards earls of Leicester: although these depicted a knight on the obverse, they bore a huntsman and hound on the reverse, possibly an allusion to the dynasty's ancestral office as the *grierius* of the great royal Forest of Yvelines.³⁹

Also popular were symbolic designs, many of which may be described as 'proto-heraldic' or 'quasi-heraldic'. A particularly fine, large and early example is the seal of Geoffrey de Clinton for Savigny in 1158, which depicts a griffin attacking a lion: this is a reminder that the remit of Norman seals transcended the borders of the duchy, since Geoffrey's father had been Henry I of England's chamberlain in England.⁴⁰ Around the same date, we see 'canting' symbols being used, such as the *wolf passant* used by the Franco-Norman magnate William Louvel of Ivry (c. 1162),⁴¹ the *eagle displayed* on the seal of Richer II, lord of l'Aigle (d. 1176),⁴² or, at a rather humbler level, the ash tree of William du Fresne, a minor landowner near Conches, in 1174.⁴³ From the early thirteenth century, non-heraldic symbols were mainly used on smaller seals, particularly of minor landowners and commoners, who

presumably did not always have recognised coats of arms.

As David Crouch and others have discussed, equestrian seals depicting true heraldic devices on shields and horse-trappings go back to well-known examples from the 1140s, especially the chevrons of the Clare kin-group⁴⁴ and the famous 'Warrenne group of chequered shields' of Count Waleran II of Meulan and his maternal uncle Count Ralph I of Vermandois, shared by a kin-group whose lands were spread across England, Normandy, and *Francia*.⁴⁵ Norman seals with a shield as the main device survive from the end of the twelfth century. In 1196, the cession of the Norman frontier fortress of Vernon to Philip Augustus bore two seals: Richard I de Vernon's equestrian seal, which depicted his arms – *a saltire* – on the shield and horse-trappings, and the seal of his son and heir Richard II de Vernon, which simply bore a shield with the same arms differenced by *a label of thirteen points*.⁴⁶ The seal of William, brother of the count of Sées or Alençon (c. 1200) bore almost identical arms to his distant cousin and namesake William, count of Ponthieu.⁴⁷

The seals of the higher clergy in Angevin and early Capetian Normandy were usually of similar form and design to elsewhere in the Anglo-French world, namely vesica-shaped and with conventional prelatial figures. Noblewomen's seals, too, were usually vesica-shaped and depicted them in very standard fashion.⁴⁸ One of the earliest is the seal of Matilda, countess of Évreux, which survives in the Archives de Yonne in Burgundy on an act for the abbey of Pontigny,⁴⁹ but by the beginning of the thirteenth century, much humbler women were issuing seals with this standard noblewoman design: two designs survive for the minor Évrecin landowner Basilia de Glisolles, for instance.⁵⁰ There were some more distinctive female seals, however, such as the seal of the Anglo-Norman heiress Agnes de Beaumont, widow of Richard du Hommet, constable of Normandy, which appears on an act concerning her inheritance in Oxfordshire.⁵¹

Burgess seals had become common in Normandy by the end of the twelfth century. Very extensive collections from Rouen include the seal of Matthew le Gros, mayor of Rouen in 1199–1200, which depicted an intaglio with a bust identified as the goddess Minerva, while his sons used a joint seal showing the Roman Empress Julia and her son Emperor Caracalla;

the seal of Geoffrey, son of the viscountess of Rouen, a burgess but shown hunting on horseback;⁵² and the seal of the commune of Rouen itself, closely modelled on the lion seal occasionally used by the Plantagenets as dukes of Normandy.⁵³ If the merchants of Rouen had special reasons to aspire to such grandeur, the burgess of smaller towns also adopted seals by 1200, such as Ralph l'Abbé, a prominent burgess of Sées and Argentan and a leading administrator in the duchy from Richard I to Philip Augustus, and his son Herbert, a clerk who was a candidate for the contested episcopal see of Sées in 1201–3.⁵⁴

A final feature of Norman seal design to note was the introduction of the counterseal, beginning under Henry II and becoming common in the early thirteenth century.⁵⁵ As elsewhere in the Anglo-French world, these could include Classical intaglios, symbols and heraldry, or miniature equestrian figures.

It will be apparent that Norman seals had few if any unique features in their design and use, and if English influences after the Norman Conquest initially created contrasts with seals in other parts of northern France, from the reign of Henry II onwards they developed very much in tandem with both England and northern France. Landowners with property on both sides of the Channel, or elsewhere in France, used the same seals in Normandy and other regions. While the seals of the higher aristocracy were distinctive, the similarity of seals of three different gentry benefactors of the abbey of La Noë suggests that their matrices were manufactured by a single workshop in the nearby city of Évreux.⁵⁶ Indeed, the very lack of variation of seals in this period across numerous kingdoms and provinces merits further discussion: even though customary law and judicial practice were hardening along provincial lines, the use of seals appears remarkably similar across political and legal boundaries. Meanwhile, the chief value of the Norman seals may simply lie in their number: thousands survive from the twelfth and first half of the thirteenth century.⁵⁷

3. The declaration on the Norman Church (1205): context

By 1204, then, the seal was the main established method of validating charters and letters in

Normandy: its variety of designs went hand in hand with its common purpose and function. However, the overthrow of the ducal régime in 1204 ended the direct political connection with England, at least for the vast majority of landowning families. It had an immediate impact upon the political complexion of the duchy, and arguably also a long-term effect upon the diplomatic practices of the Norman aristocracy, as Northern French charters abandoned the witness-list and dating clauses became ubiquitous.

The French victory forced many of the most prominent barons to retreat to England, including eleven earls and counts and leading barons such as the lords of Briouze, Gournay, Montbray (Mowbray) and Tosny. At a stroke, the duchy lost much of the élite that had dominated the region for the previous couple of centuries. However, this disaster for much of the Anglo-Norman ruling class served some people well: it brought to the fore those Norman magnates who remained in the duchy; it allowed the rapid rise of Norman families who served the new régime; and it introduced a number of courtiers, soldiers, administrators and clerks from the Île-de-France.⁵⁸ Under the kings of England, Normandy had become accustomed to the ruler's frequent absences, and the early Capetian kings also rarely ventured further north and west than the duchy's south-east corner, preferring to control Normandy through bailiffs and castellans – mostly from the Île-de-France – and through periodic taking of pledges.⁵⁹ Despite the surveillance of the Capetian régime, gatherings such as the twice-yearly exchequer meetings suggest that the Norman aristocracy enjoyed considerable autonomy and could act together as a single community upon occasion. Apart from the surrender of Rouen itself, in which seven barons and knights and thirty-three burgesses treated with the king of France and his leading courtiers,⁶⁰ the declaration concerning the Norman clergy in 1205 appears to have been the first significant demonstration of common action by the survivors of the Capetian conquest of Normandy.

The exact reason for the declaration is not recorded, although references in the text suggest that it may have been provoked by a dispute over the judicial rights of the bishop of Lisieux: it is also clear that the jurors themselves proved jealous of lay



Fig. 3.1. (above) *The declaration concerning the Norman Church (Rouen, 13 Nov. 1205). Paris, Archives Nationales, J 210, no. 2.* All subsequent images have the same document reference, unless otherwise indicated.



Fig. 3.2. *The two groups of attached seals and the three detached seals.*



Fig. 3.3. *The left group of seals.*



Fig. 3.4. *Seal of William Martel (extant: privy seal). a) mould b) extant seal.*

rights.⁶¹ Philip Augustus' relationship with the Norman Church after 1204 was testy, and his regulation of the Norman Church formed part of a broader move to define and tighten royal rights over the Church across the Capetian *regnum*.⁶² The declaration of 1205 concerned a wide range of issues as they had supposedly obtained in the time of Henry II and Richard I – King John's reign being treated as a legal nullity.⁶³ The barons swore that the rights of the clergy had been very restricted in matters such as advowsons, excommunication of royal bailiffs and clerks, the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts, both across the duchy and in specified regions, debts and usurers' goods, and criminous clerks. It was not, however, intended to be a definitive statement, for the act expressly stated that important Norman barons were absent: these would have included the counts of Eu and Alençon and the lords of Harcourt, Le Neubourg, Creully and l'Aigle, amongst others, and, indeed, fourteen of the twenty-two named barons were from eastern Normandy, chiefly the region of Rouen itself. Admitting the fallibility of human memory and the problem of absences, the barons stated that a further meeting would be required.⁶⁴ Philip Augustus would regulate the property and legal rights of the Norman clergy on several more occasions during his reign.⁶⁵

4. The declaration: document and seals

The document itself is 450 mm across and 220 mm down, including a 45 mm *plica*. It is written in what may well be a Capetian chancery hand, in 23 lines of text, with the words of the first line enlarged and widely spaced.⁶⁶ The document itself is not particularly remarkable: indeed, the most striking aspect of its external features is its method of multiple sealing (Fig. 3.1). Rather than being attached individually, the seals were suspended by silk laces in two distinct groups, each attached through two sets of holes through the *plica* (fold). This is highly unusual: the more usual methods of multiple sealing consisted either of attaching each seal separately,⁶⁷ or else hanging more than one seal on each attachment.⁶⁸ Another noticeable aspect of the seals is their thickness: they are mostly exceptionally thin, rarely exceeding 3 mm. The seals were probably made so thin in order to attach them together, but since all

are in 'natural' yellow-brown wax, without added varnish or colour, they must have been unusually fragile.

On the basis of the barons named in the document, Teulet made the plausible assumption that there were originally 22 seals (see Appendix); presumably these were attached in two groups of 11. In 1852 Léopold Delisle described the act as having 17 seals,⁶⁹ but by the time that Teulet published the act in 1863, he stated that only 13 were left, in two groups of seven (left) and six (right) respectively. On this basis, between 1205 and 1863 four seals had been lost from the left group, and five from the right. However, Teulet did not say which 13 seals survived; he merely observed that the seals of five men (Philip de Vassy, William de Serans, John de Rouvray, Odo castellan of Beauvais, and Thomas de Pavilly) could not be described as they did not exist in any copy at the Archives Nationales or anywhere else. For descriptions of the other 17 seals, Teulet gave references to the great three-volume inventory of seals in the Archives Nationales that his colleague Louis Douët d'Arcq was then compiling: in fact, 14, not 13, of Douët d'Arcq's descriptions were taken from seals on this document, while three others (Renaud of Boulogne, Roger de Meulan, and William du Hommet) were described from seals on other documents at the Archives Nationales, although Roger's seal does in fact survive.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, Douët d'Arcq was having plaster-casts made of the seals in his inventory; thousands of these *moulages* today survive in cabinets in the back rooms of the Archives Nationales.

Since then, the seals have suffered regrettable losses. While 15 identifiable seals apparently survived in 1863, today the document bears only nine seals, and a further three survive detached from the document (Fig. 3.2).⁷¹ Furthermore, comparisons with the nineteenth-century plaster-casts reveal that several of the extant seals have suffered serious damage since the 1860s, and one of them cannot now be identified. The seals of Henry d'Étouteville, Ralph Taisson, Henry de Ferrières and Robert de Courcy have been lost since the 1860s and are known only from their moulds. Of the seven seals that had apparently been lost before 1863, the designs of two – those of Count Renaud of Boulogne and William du Hommet – were identified by Teulet from other acts in the Archives Nationales,

although the identification of William's seal is in fact uncertain.⁷² Another lost seal (William de Serans) was briefly described in Demay's *Inventaire des Sceaux de la Normandie* from an exemplar in the Archives de la Manche, but must have perished in the archives' destruction in 1944, but fortunately, evidence of its design survives elsewhere; while at least one seal of John de Rouvray, and possibly more, survived in the Archives des Yvelines into modern times. The designs of the other three lost seals (Vassy, Pavilly, and the castellan of Beauvais) are not known.

In terms of design, the seals may be classified as (i) equestrian; (ii) symbolic, in which symbols do not appear on a shield (even if these are the same as a hereditary armorial device used then or later by the same person or his kin); and (iii) heraldic or armorial, in which the main object is a shield bearing a coat of arms, normally a device that already was, or would become, hereditary. Some of the symbolic seals are Classical in design. Table 3.1 in Appendix 3.1 gives full descriptions of the seals, but the following comments are intended to highlight their more distinctive features and consider the problems that they pose to historians, as well as to provide relevant details about the sigillants themselves.

A. There are five extant seals on the left (Fig. 3.3)

I. William Martel (Fig. 3.4, a, b)

William was one of the leading barons of the Pays de Caux, and had also held land in England until 1204.⁷³ His small rounded oval seal, 30 mm across, is one of two which are identified by their inscriptions as a privy seal (*secretum*); it depicts a rider hawking.

II. William de Tancarville (Fig. 3.5, a–c)

The medium-sized seal of the hereditary chamberlain of Normandy, who had very extensive lands in the Pays de Caux and Pays d'Auge and who had lost lands in several English counties in 1204, is one of several heraldic examples, as it bears a shield with *an orle between six estoiles* (arms that were used, with slight variations, by the chamberlain's descendants).⁷⁴ It is one of only four remaining seals with a counterseal, bearing an estoile that alludes to the sigillant's arms on the obverse. Tancarville's seal has suffered significant loss since a mould was made in the 1860s, so that



Fig. 3.5. Seal of William de Tancarville; a) mould; b) extant seal; c) extant counter seal.

much of the sinister side of the shield is now lost.

III. Stephen de Longchamps (Fig. 3.6, a, b)

Stephen came from the Norman Vexin and was brother of William, bishop of Ely, the notorious governor of England under Richard I. He had served both Richard and King John, becoming lord of Cailly and Baudemont by marriage, but would lose his life fighting for Philip Augustus at the battle of Bouvines in 1214.⁷⁵ The symbols on his quite small seal, a crescent moon and seven-rayed *estoile*, were quasi-heraldic, for Bishop William's seal bore them as well, and the Longchamps family later depicted crescents on their arms.⁷⁶

IV. William de Préaux (Fig. 3.7, a, b)

William de Préaux was the fourth of five brothers from the region of Rouen who were distinguished royal knights;⁷⁷ William had even allowed himself to be captured in place of Richard I during the Third Crusade.⁷⁸ While his career mainly took place in Normandy, he had briefly held the important honour of Okehampton (Devon) in 1203, as prospective husband of its lady,⁷⁹ and in 1215 he would return to England to claim the dower of his then wife Philippa, widow of William Malet, in Lincolnshire.⁸⁰ William's large symbolic seal depicts an eagle displayed, and has been much damaged and restored since 1863.⁸¹ The eagle was a heraldic symbol of the Préaux family, for it appeared on the arms of his eldest brother John (see below, No. X), and a double-headed eagle was used on the symbolic seal of their brother Peter, the commander of King John's garrison at Rouen, when he agreed a truce with the king of France on 1 June 1204, shortly before the city's surrender; the son of the youngest brother, Enguerrand, likewise later had an eagle on his seal.⁸²

V. Nicholas de Montagny (Fig. 3.8, a, b)

Unlike the other jurors, almost nothing is known about Nicholas, a knight from the borders of the Pays de Bray and Norman Vexin, before 1203, when he and his kinsman Enguerrand benefited from the expulsion of their lord Hugh de Gournay, during the struggle between King John and Philip Augustus.⁸³ It is therefore interesting that he used an armorial seal, bearing *four bendlets and*

a canton charged with a roundel: his seal clearly proclaimed his knightly status.

B. There are four extant seals on the right (Fig. 3.9)

VI. William de Mortemer (Fig. 3.10, a–c)

A knight with lands in the Pays de Caux and Roumois, as well as in Norfolk until 1204, Mortemer caught the attention of the Old French narratives for his defence of Norman castles on behalf of Richard I and King John.⁸⁴ His social and cultural aspirations are suggested by the fact that his seal bore a Classical motif, apparently a depiction of Hercules carrying a club. Another extant example of this seal survives on an act issued in 1224, but it was 10 mm thick, compared to the 4 mm of his seal on the declaration of 1205, and it had an ornate counterseal depicting a beast *statant*, possibly a bear (Fig. 3.11, a, b).⁸⁵

VII. Fulk Paynel (Fig. 3.12, a, b)

The seal of Fulk II Paynel, one of the chief barons of the Cotentin and Avranchin and, until 1204, a Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire landowner as well,⁸⁶ identifies itself as his privy seal. It bears a curious, possibly Classical motif, in which a standing figure, perhaps a child, presents a seated figure, probably a woman, with a bowl or similar object. The meaning of this scene is now lost. Douët d'Arcq believed it was moulded from an engraved gemstone, which would explain the seal's concave, oval form.⁸⁷ The stone was reused in the seal of Fulk's son and successor Fulk III, although his seal had a broader inscription and a symbolic counterseal (Fig. 3.13, a, b).⁸⁸ No other extant seal is known for Fulk II.⁸⁹

VIII. Robert d'Esneval (Fig. 3.14, a, b)

Robert d'Esneval, a baron of the Roumois and Pays de Caux who also held land in Norfolk and Kent until 1204, had come of age only a few years before the declaration on the Norman Church, but his youth was evidently no bar to his participation in stating the customs that had governed the Norman Church before 1199. Nor was his youth an obstacle to his having a seal.⁹⁰ Indeed, his armorial seal was remarkably large, being the same size (55 mm across) as William de Tancarville's seal, although he came from a much less renowned or powerful family.⁹¹

IX. An unidentified seal (William du Hommet?)
(Fig. 3.15, a, b)

The most perplexing of all the surviving seals, this unidentified fragment cannot be linked to any entry in Douët d'Arcq's catalogue; presumably it was too damaged to merit inclusion. The seal's obverse is equestrian, while its counterseal appears to depict a human figure, possibly a head and neck. The inscriptions are too mutilated to give much clue to its identity, but the foot of the obverse appears to read "T-O" or possibly "E-T-O". This may indicate William du Hommet (*de Hometo*), constable of Normandy, but the seal does not match the design of the seals of either William I du Hommet or his grandson William II. Most probably the William who was a juror at the Rouen declaration was the grandson, for whom a seal is known from two fine impressions from the 1220s and 1230s as well as a third impression which cannot be dated because of the loss of its parent charter.⁹² William II's seal was equestrian and had a counterseal, like the unidentified fragment in question, but the designs on both sides were clearly different. Furthermore, while it is difficult to extrapolate the size of the original seal from the extant fragment, it appears to have been larger than William's II's known seal (perhaps 65–70 mm across compared to 53–55 mm across). The fragment's putative size is much closer to the seal of William I du Hommet (70 mm), but that seal had no counterseal and a very different, older equestrian design.

William II du Hommet was constable of Normandy by Easter 1205,⁹³ but his grandfather had apparently retired to the abbey of Aunay in 1204 and so may have still been alive and able to participate in a public event such as the Rouen declaration – the text named simply 'William du Hommet', without giving the title of constable.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, there is no other evidence for William I after 1204, and most probably the juror of 1205 was the grandson. If the seal fragment is indeed that of William II du Hommet, it must bear the imprint of a different matrix from his later seals. It is possible that the grandson began his career with a large seal like his grandfather's, but using a counterseal; but later, in keeping with the times, he opted for a smaller seal and a more Classical counterseal. Nevertheless, the identification of this seal fragment must remain in doubt.

C. Extant detached seals (Fig. 3.16)

Three detached seals have been preserved with the declaration: their thin size, wax type and colour, and nineteenth-century moulds leave no doubt that they come from the same document.

X. John de Préaux (Fig. 3.17, a, b)

John de Préaux was a prominent baron of the districts between Rouen and the eastern Norman frontier, and had also held lands in Kent and Gloucestershire in right of his wife until 1204. As the eldest of the Préaux brothers, it was fitting that he bore a larger and more elaborate seal than those of his brothers Peter and William: whereas they had single-sided symbolic seals (see above, No. IV), his was equestrian in design and had a counterseal. All three seals, however, emphasised the *eagle displayed* of their family arms. It appeared on the shield of the horseman on the obverse of John's seal. The counterseal also alluded to these arms with a similar eagle, but this time its head was turned to sinister. Like William's seal, John's has suffered badly since the 1860s, losing most of what then remained of the inscription on the obverse as well as the rider's sword and the horse's hind quarters.

XI. Hugh de Coulonces (Fig. 3.18, a, b)

Hugh was a baron from southwest Normandy, who had also lost land in England in 1204.⁹⁵ His armorial seal bears *fretty, a canton sinister*. The inscription is distinguished by its poor Latin, and much of it, on the left of the seal, has been lost since 1863.

XII. Roger de Meulan (Fig. 3.19, a, b)

As an active supporter of Philip Augustus since at least 1195, this scion of a renowned Franco-Norman family had survived the downfall of his elder brother, Count Robert of Meulan, in 1203–4.⁹⁶ In 1196, he had used a symbolic seal bearing a *lion passant*,⁹⁷ but by 1204 he had adopted a genuinely heraldic seal, depicting a shield with a *lion rampant* – arms that recurred in various forms upon the seals of his descendants, lords of Quittebeuf near Évreux and La Queue-en-Brie and Gournay-sur-Marne east of Paris.⁹⁸ It was the second, armorial version that was affixed to the declaration of 1205.

D. Moulages of seals lost since 1863–67

In addition to the extant seals, we have



Fig. 3.6. Seal of Stephen de Longchamps; a) mould; b) extant seal.



Fig. 3.7. Seal of William de Préaux; a) mould; b) extant seal



Fig. 3.8. Seal of Nicholas de Montagny; a) mould; b) extant seal.

Fig. 3.9. The right group of seals.



Fig. 3.10. Seal of William de Mortemer; a) mould; b) extant seal; c) enlargement of b).

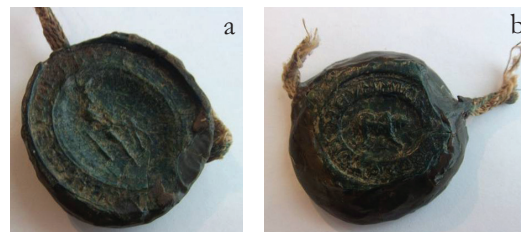


Fig. 3.11. a) Seal (obverse) and b) counterseal of William de Mortemer (1224). Rouen, AD Seine-Maritime, 9 H 30.



Fig. 3.12. Seal of Fulk II Paynel; a) moulds (Fulk III, 1230; Fulk II, 1205; b) original (Fulk II, 1205).



Fig. 3.13. Comparisons between seals of Fulk (II) and Fulk (III) Paynel; a) seals of Fulk III (left) and Fulk II (right) b) seal of Fulk III (AN, J 395, no. 31) (counterseal not shown).

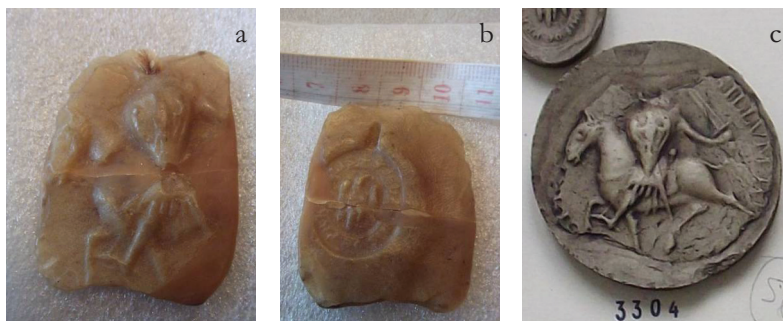


Fig. 3.17. Seal of John de Préaux (extant, detached); a) obverse; b) counterseal; c) mould (not shown).



Fig. 3.14. Seal of Robert d'Esneval; a) mould; b) extant seal.



Fig. 3.18. Seal of Hugh de Coulonces (extant, detached); a) mould; b) extant seal.



Fig. 3.15. Unidentified seal (equestrian, to sinister); a) obverse; b) counterseal.



Fig. 3.19. Seal of Roger de Meulan (extant, detached); a) moulds of Roger's seals of 1205 and 1196; b) Roger's seal from the Rouen declaration.



Fig. 3.16. The detached seals.



Fig. 3.20. Seal of Henry d'Étoutteville (lost since 1863): mould.



Fig. 3.21. Seal of Ralph Taisson (lost since 1867): mould.

surviving moulds for four others that have been lost since the first two volumes of Douët d'Arcq's inventory. All but one are heraldic.

XIII. Henry d'Étoutteville (Fig. 3.20)

Henry was a leading baron of the Pays de Caux and also held substantial lands in England before 1204, some of which he later recovered.⁹⁹ The mould of his seal shows that it bore arms of *barry, a lion rampant facing sinister*.

XIV. Ralph Taisson (Fig. 3.21)

Ralph Taisson was one of the chief barons of western and central Normandy and a former chief seneschal of the duchy; until 1204 he had held lands in England.¹⁰⁰ His seal bears an ornate shield with arms of *barry of six cotised and diapered*.¹⁰¹ The shield is between an estoile and crescent moon, and also, more unusually, a capital *R* and *T* to represent the sigillant's initials.

XV. Henry de Ferrières (Fig. 3.22)

Henry, a cousin of the Ferrers earls of Derby, had his lordship around Ferrières-Saint-Hilaire, Chambrais (now Broglie) and Bourghéroulde in central Normandy, and had held several manors in Rutland and Gloucestershire until 1204.¹⁰² The horseshoes on his seal and counterseal are the only 'canting' devices amongst the seals on the Rouen declaration. Although, as we have seen, seals with canting symbols had been used in Normandy for at least 40 years, Ferrières' example is one of the earliest Norman heraldic seals with canting arms.¹⁰³

XVI. Robert de Courcy (Fig. 3.23)

Robert de Courcy was the head of the 'Norman' branch of one of the oldest and most renowned families from central Normandy, and had lost lands in Hampshire and Kent in 1204.¹⁰⁴ Robert had an equestrian seal; beneath the horseman was a small four-legged creature filling the curve of the seal, too damaged by 1863 to allow certain identification.¹⁰⁵

E.–F. Lost seals known from other examples

Three other seals can be described from elsewhere, although only the first was certainly being used by its owner in 1205.

XVII. Renaud, count of Boulogne (Fig. 3.24, a, b)
Renaud de Dammartin was the most powerful of the barons at the inquest at Rouen, one of the most ambitious, and arguably the most notorious.¹⁰⁶ Not surprisingly, at 80 mm across his seal was the largest by a considerable margin. It represents an early example of a pair of designs that would become very common in the thirteenth century but which was still almost unknown in Normandy in 1205, namely an equestrian obverse with a heraldic counterseal.¹⁰⁷ On the obverse, the rider's arms were clearly displayed as those of the counts of Dammartin, *barry of six within a bordure*: the counterseal depicts a shield with the same arms.¹⁰⁸

XVIII. William de Serans (Fig. 3.25, a, b)

While no examples of the seal of this knight, who hailed from the district of Argentan, survive today, one existed in the Archives de la Manche until the Second World War. Demay's inventory of Norman seals describes it as equestrian but provides no details except the inscription; an early twentieth-century photograph, now in the Archives du Calvados, reveals that the horseman did not bear a coat of arms on his shield, while Demay's *moulage* in the Archives Nationales indicates its size.¹⁰⁹

XIX. John de Rouvray

John, a knight from Rouvray-Catillon in the Pays de Bray, had joined Philip Augustus as early as 1194, and in 1204 he had negotiated the surrender of Norman castles with John de Préaux on King Philip's behalf, at a time when each had a brother defending Rouen for King John.¹¹⁰ A seal of his survived in 1857 on an act of 1229, but is now lost: it had a shield bearing *barry, a lion rampant*,¹¹¹ and these arms were used on the seals of his descendants.¹¹² It is plausible that John was using the same seal in 1205: if so, he had already added a lion to the *barruly* arms borne by his elder brother Osbert, whose seal design is known from a Gaignières drawing.¹¹³

G. Unknown seals

The seals of the remaining three sigillants are not known from any extant examples.

XX. Philip de Vassy

Philip de Vassy was a prominent baron in the diocese of Bayeux. At least one original act of his survives, but without its seal.¹¹⁴

XXI. Odo, castellan of Beauvais

The castellans of Beauvais had once been powerful in the city and diocese of Beauvais but had had their wings clipped in the twelfth century by the king of France and bishops of Beauvais.¹¹⁵ Despite his non-Norman title, Odo had been involved in Norman affairs long before 1193, and so was certainly eligible to state the customs governing the Norman church under Henry II and Richard I.¹¹⁶

XXII. Thomas de Pavilly

Thomas was the head of the 'Norman' branch of a prominent Anglo-Norman family; he also held lands in Hertfordshire and Norfolk until 1204, and his three sons would recover these in the 1230s.¹¹⁷ An act that Thomas granted to the abbey of Beaubec survives but has lost its seal.¹¹⁸

5. Conclusions

Paul Harvey and Andrew McGuinness have written that documents with multiple seals 'provide a valuable snapshot of the seals that were in use by a particular group of people'.¹¹⁹ On that basis, the diversity of designs and sizes on the seals attached to the declaration of 1205 is very striking. Within a group of 19 seals, we find traditional equestrian seals, newly fashionable armorial ones, symbolic, and Classical (or classicising) seals; large and small, single- and double-sided, oval and circular; 'great' and 'privy' seals. Some fall into a common pattern from their lineage, others depart radically from the seals of their kin.

The wide range of designs contrasts strongly with the similarity of the sigillants. It is true that there were big differences in social status, ancestry, ambition, power, and geographical concerns between the count of Boulogne or the representatives of ancient Norman lignages such as Courcy and Ferrières on the one hand, and the *novi homines* Nicholas de Montagny and John de Rouvray on the other. The Capetian clerk who categorised the magnates of the realm into 'counts', 'barons', 'castellans' and 'vavassors' placed members of the Rouen group in all four categories, and omitted eleven of the 22 sigillants altogether.¹²⁰ Despite these social distinctions, the jurors shared a common status as a large part of the élite of the new Capetian Normandy. Eighteen of them or their heirs would be

numbered amongst the 60 knights-banneret of Normandy listed in the Registers of Philip Augustus a few years later.¹²¹ Their statements at Rouen in 1205 represented the Norman aristocracy's collective response to the Capetian takeover, and so the social differences between them mattered much less than their joint action.

The document of 1205 catches a unique stage in Norman history, and the seals in their turn catch a particular moment in the history of Norman seals when a number of different artistic traditions rubbed shoulders with each other. The seals attached to the document were much more diverse than Norman seals 30 years earlier, which were mostly symbolic or equestrian. They were also much more varied than Norman seals 30 years later, which were mostly armorial or, to a lesser extent, equestrian at the upper end of the social scale, and symbolic at the lower end. By then, the revitalised office of *vicomte* was leading to the introduction of small, symbolic (usually floral) seals for the many acts of these Capetian officers, which became one of the dominant forms of validation of transactions by 1300. The *vicomtes'* seals had their ecclesiastical counterpart in the small seals which the diocesan officials increasingly adopted. Hence the seals of the declaration of 1205 stand as one aspect of a flowering of diplomatic innovation and experimentation that replaced earlier traditions in a much more oral society, and which would be superseded in turn by a more formal culture with more standardised legal conventions and documents.

Many of these conclusions apply to the broader sealing culture of much of Latin Christendom at the beginning of the thirteenth century. As we have seen, of the 22 sigillants of the Rouen declaration, 16 had held lands in England before 1204, and four of them, Renaud of Boulogne, Henry d'Étouteville, William de Préaux and Robert d'Esneval, would actually recover or acquire English lands after 1205, as would Thomas de Pavilly's sons. Of the six who had not been English landowners,¹²² Roger de Meulan and John de Rouvray came from families which had held property in England until 1204.¹²³ Conversely, four of the jurors (the count of Boulogne, the castellan of Beauvais, John de Rouvray, and Roger de Meulan) had lands in other parts of France. The seals came from a much wider Anglo-French political, diplomatic and sigillographic

Fig. 3.22. Seal of Henry de Ferrières (lost since 1863): mould (including counterseal).



Fig. 3.23. Seal of Robert de Courcy (lost since 1863): mould



Fig. 3.24. Seal of Count Renaud of Boulogne (Feb. 1205): mould from AN, J 238, no. 5; a) mould: obverse; b) mould: counterseal



Fig. 3.25. Seal of William de Serans (AD Manche, destroyed in 1944); a) photograph (AD Calvados, F 5690, fol. 128v); b) moulage (Archives Nationales)

context. Although the legal contexts of England and Normandy diverged significantly after the Capetian conquest of Normandy in 1204, with consequences for other features of sealed charters such as witness-lists and dating clauses, Norman seals developed in patterns similar to neighbouring parts of Europe. The seals attached to the declaration concerning the Norman Church in 1205 represent a cross-section of the Norman lay aristocracy at a turning-point in the duchy's history, but they also can be taken as a representative sample of aristocratic seals in western Europe at a crucial stage in the development of the use and design of these fascinating objects.

Notes

- 1 I am enormously grateful to Ghislain Brunel, *conservateur au département du Moyen Âge et de l'Ancien Régime* at the Archives Nationales de France, for allowing me to consult this precious document and numerous other sealed documents and for discussing them with me. I also wish to thank Philipp Schofield for his invitation to me to speak at the *Medieval Seals and their Context* conference, Richard Allen, Mathilde Geley, John Stevenson and Kathleen Thompson for their assistance, and the reading group of the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Research (MEMO) at Swansea University for its comments upon a draft of this article. The following abbreviations are used below: AD = Archives Départementales; ADC = Caen, AD du Calvados; ADE = Évreux, AD Eure; ADO = Alençon, AD de l'Orne; ADSM = Rouen, AD de la Seine-Maritime; AN = Paris, Archives Nationales de France; BM Rouen = Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale; BNF = Bibliothèque Nationale de France; CA = dépt. Calvados; SM = département de la Seine-Maritime; Demay = G. Demay, *Inventaire des Sceaux de la Normandie* (Paris, 1880); Douët d'Arcq = *Archives de l'Empire. Collection des Sceaux*, ed. L. Douët d'Arcq (3 vols, Paris, 1863–8); *Layettes* = *Layettes du Trésor des Chartes*, ed. A. Teulet et al. (5 vols, Paris, 1863–1909); *RHF* = *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. D. Bouquet et al. (24 vols in 25, 1738–1904); TNA = Kew, The National Archives.

In this article, I have used the term 'seal' to refer to the wax impression, in accordance with contemporary usage of the term *sigillum*.

- 2 AN, J 210, no. 2, edited in *Layettes*, i, no. 785. The act was also copied into all the registers of Philip Augustus (*Les Registres de Philippe Auguste*, ed. J. W. Baldwin, i (*texte*) (Paris, 1992),

- i, pp. 56–9, *Inquisitiones*, no. 14), with very few scribal variations, and was translated at an early date into French, and it was published several times before Teulet's edition: see *Cartulaire Normand de Philippe Auguste, Louis VIII, Saint Louis et Philippe-le-Hardi*, ed. L. Delisle (Caen, 1852), no. 124, and *Catalogue des actes de Philippe-Auguste*, ed. L. Delisle (Paris, 1856), no. 961. An incomplete and defective copy was recorded in the cartulary of the lazarus of St-Gilles de Pont-Audemer (BM Rouen, Y 200, fols 43v–44v).
- 3 BNF, ms. lat. 5464, catalogued in *Sceaux de l'abbaye de la Noë conservée à la Bibliothèque Nationale: Inventaire*, ed. M. Dalas (Paris, 1993).
 - 4 AN, L 966 – L 978 (cf. L 979, the muniments of the priory of Notre-Dame de Mortain, alias the Abbaye-Blanche), and BM Rouen, Collection Leber 5636. For a study based upon the collection, see B. Poule, 'Renouvellement et garantie de sceaux privés', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 146 (1988), 369–80.
 - 5 B. Bedos-Rezak, 'L'apparition des armoiries sur les sceaux en Île-de-France et en Picardie (1130–1230)', *Les origines des armoiries*, ed. H. Pinoteau, M. Pastoureau and M. Popoff (Paris, 1983), pp. 23–41, repr. in her collected essays *Form and Order in Medieval France: studies in social and quantitative sigillography* (Aldershot, 1993), no. VII; N. Civel, *La fleur de France. Les seigneurs d'Île-de-France au XII^e siècle* (Turnhout, 2006).
 - 6 M. Billoré, 'Pouvoir et noblesse Normandie (fin XII^e–début XIII^e siècles) : de l'autocratie Plantagenêt à la domination capétienne' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Poitiers, 2005): 'Catalogue des sceaux de l'aristocratie possessionnée en Normandie (mi-XII^e – fin XIII^e siècles)'.
 - 7 E.g. P. Bony, 'L'image du pouvoir seigneurial dans les sceaux: codification des signes de la puissance de la fin du XI^e au début du XIII^e siècle dans les pays d'Oïl', *Seigneurs et seigneuries au Moyen Âge: Actes du 117^e Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes, Clermont-Ferrand, 1992* (1993), pp. 489–523.
 - 8 See the works cited below, nn. 44 (Crouch), 48 (Johns).
 - 9 J.-L. Chassel, 'L'essor du sceau au XI^e siècle', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 155 (1997), 221–34.
 - 10 For the seals of William the Conqueror, see *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum. The Acta of William I (1066–1087)*, ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998), pp. 21 (Normandy), 36–7 (Maine), 102–5 (general), and sources cited there. It seems clear that William I's adoption of the sealed writ from Anglo-Saxon tradition was the most important factor, but a few of his diplomas in Normandy were also sealed.
 - 11 E. Z. Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* (Chapel Hill, 1988), pp. 220–1, and notes, 389–91. Her argument that the seal's initial purpose in Normandy was to verify the authenticity of *signa* has not been universally accepted (e.g. B. M. Bedos-Redak, 'Medieval identity: a sign and a concept', *American Historical Review* 105 (2000), 1489–1533, at p. 1507, n. 51).
 - 12 E.g. Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, pp. 221 n.76 and 390 n.76, nos 538 (Gilbert de Vascoeuil), 796 (Robert de Poissy), which date respectively from the late twelfth and the early thirteenth centuries.
 - 13 For example, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye bénédictine de Saint-Pierre-de-Préaux (1034–1227)*, ed. D. Rouet (Paris 2005), pp. 209–10, no. B2, a *conventio* between Count Simon of Évreux and Count Waleran of Meulan, makes no mention of a seal. For this agreement, see D. Crouch, 'A Norman *conventio* and bonds of lordship in the Middle Ages', *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy*, ed. G. Garnett and J. Hudson (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 299–324, at pp. 303–4.
 - 14 ADC, H 1201 (Say), H 667 (Mandeville, c. 1153 x 1166).
 - 15 ADSM, 14 H 915 (Rouen, 1153).
 - 16 E.g. AN, L 979, no. 78 (William fitzEmpress, brother of Henry II, for the nuns of Mortain, 1154 x 1164), was sealed, but also inscribed with a single large cross, without an identifying name: this may have been intended as a *signum*, although it differs in appearance and size from most *signa*.
 - 17 B. Bedos-Rezak, 'Les sceaux au temps de Philippe Auguste', *La France de Philippe Auguste: le temps des mutations*, ed. R.-H. Bautier (Paris, 1982), pp. 721–36 (repr. in her *Form and Order*, no. II) (for France in general); N. Civel, *La fleur de France*, pp. 253–64 (aristocratic seals in the Île-de-France).
 - 18 Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, p. 221.
 - 19 For a nice example of hierarchical sealing from just outside Normandy, see AN, S 2238, an act of Count Rotrou III of Perche (1190): it is sealed from left to right by him and his sons Geoffrey, Rotrou, and Stephen, in order of their birth.
 - 20 E.g. D. Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins: the roots and branches of power in the twelfth century* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 153 (chancery of the counts of Meulan).
 - 21 ADSM, 1 H 26: act of Robert, knight of Gauville (dépt. Somme, cant. Poix-de-Picardie), and his son Ralph, for the abbey

- of Aumale (slit for one seal only): *et quia proprium sigillum non habuimus, hanc donationem sigillo Roberti constab(ularii) confirmauimus et sigillatam super altare posuimus*. Cf. ADE, H 395, an act of Enguerrand Pilavoine (*Pilauene*) for the canons of Île-Dieu near Rouen (s.d., late twelfth century): *et ne aliqua in posterum contrarietas oriatur, sigilli domini mei Gisleberti de Wascolio impressione confirmauit*; the sealing lord, Gilbert de Vascoeil, was also the first witness.
- 22 ADSM, 8 H 100: Robert de Rétonval confirms all the gifts at Campneuseville (SM, cant. Blangy-sur-Bresle) made by his grandfather Robert and father *Oelardus*, which they granted *et carta Iohannis comitis Angi confirmari et sigillari fecerunt* (1196).
- 23 ADC, H 6679: *Will(elm)us Pantulfus iunior, Rogerius et Philipus (sic). filli Will(elm)i Pantulfi de Sameella et Burga uxor eius ... hanc autem donationem concedimus ratam. et patris nostri consignamus sigillo et munimus*. Samesle: dépt. Orne, cant. Vimoutiers, cne. Le Sap. William Pantulf also held Breedon-on-the-Hill (Leics.): *Early Yorkshire Charters*, i–iii, ed. W. Farrer (Edinburgh, 1914–16), and iv–xii, ed. C.T. Clay (Leeds, 1935–65), ix, p. 25.
- 24 E.g. AN, L 967, no. 152: notice of dispute between Leonesius de Fougères and the abbey of Savigny over the church of Brécéy (dépt. Manche, chef-lieu du cant.), with slits for a lost single seal, but the text does not state whose it was (s.d., c. 1195). Cf. nos 152–4, and BM Rouen, Coll. Leber 5636, no. 10, for sealed acts concerning the same dispute, issued respectively by Leonesius' lord William de Fougères, Bishop William of Avranches, and papal judges-delegate (all undated), and Bishop Herbert of Rennes (Sept. 1195).
- 25 ADSM, 1 H 23, agreement between Enguerrand, viscount of Aumale, and Abbot Natalis of Aumale (c. 1144 x c. 1152, seal lost), concerning Aumont (cne. Gauville, for which, see n. 21 above). ADO, H 3912: agreement between the abbeys of Saint-Ouen de Rouen and Almenêches (1157, two lost seals at top of chirograph), concerning Cinq-Autels (CA, cant. Bretteville-sur-Laize, cne. Cinq-Autels).
- 26 For the remainder of this paragraph, see D. Power, 'En quête de sécurité juridique dans la Normandie angevine: concorde finale et inscription au rouleau', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 168 (2010), 327–71.
- 27 See the final concords transcribed into a roll of chirographs (*Rotuli Normanniæ in Turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. T. D. Hardy (London, 1835), pp. 1–22), which lack any form of sealing clauses, and ADO, H 3333, a rare example of an extant unsealed final concord (although it does have a *plica*), both discussed in Power, 'En quête de sécurité juridique'.
- 28 *Curia Regis Rolls, Richard I–Henry III* (20 vols to date, London, 1922–), vi, pp. 397–9. Engelger de Bohon *petit sibi allocari quod cirographum illud non est factum in forma aliorum cirographorum factorum in curia domini regis et quod sigillum appositum est illi cirographo et similiter quod non fit mencio in cirographo in cuius regis tempore factum fuit*. The text of the chirograph recorded in the plea roll shows that each party had sealed the other's half: *Ad maiorem vero securitatem Radulfus de Arderne apposuit sigillum suum illi parti cirographi que remanet Evingero (lege: Eniugero), et Evingerus (lege: Eniugerus) apposuit sigillum suum illi parti que remanet predicto*.
- 29 E.g. ADO, H 1749, a chirograph between the abbots of Perseigne (dioc. Le Mans) and Silly-en-Gouffern (dioc. Sées) for which both halves survive (1211): *sicut in cirographo (sic) a nobis mutuo assensu conscripto et sigillato plenius ordinatum est*. Each abbot sealed his own act, and both halves were also sealed by the abbots of St-André-en-Gouffern and Ardenne, i.e. another abbey from each of the orders involved (respectively the Cistercians and Premonstratensians).
- 30 Philippe de Beaumanoir, *Les coutumes de Clermont-en-Beauvaisis*, ed. A. Salmon and G. Hubrecht (3 vols, Paris, 1899–1974), e.g. i, p. 78 (§§ 144–5); ii, pp. 44–5, 48–9, 56–59, 119–20, 124–5 (§§ 1076, 1084–5, 1097–9, 1202–3, 1214–16); *The Coutumes de Beauvaisis of Philippe de Beaumanoir*, trans. F. R. P. Akehurst (Philadelphia, 1992), pp. 59, 382–3, 385, 390–1, 434–5, 438–9.
- 31 ADC, H non classée 70 (Plessis-Grimoult, Carton 8 (2)), liasse 8: act of John de Orna, clerk, stating that his father resigned the church of Feuguerolles (CA, cant. Évrecy, cne. Feuguerolles-Bully) to the priory (s.d., c. 1200): *Cum nero sepe dictus pater meus ante sigillationem huius resignationis decessisset ego primogenitus ipsius resignationem eius approbans, iam dicto juri patronatus similiter caritatis intuitu penitus resignavi*.
- 32 ADC, H 6636 (*dictum* of arbiters), ed. in *RHF*, xxiv, I, *préface*, pp. 291*–292* (preuves, no. 78, from which the missing letters are supplied below): *Abbas nero pro se et conuentu suo plures cartas demonstrauit, quas habent de antecessoribus prefati Geruasii, super donis et elemosinis quas habent dicti abbas et conuentus ex donis eorundem antecessorum, et etiam quandam cartam sigillis Iohannis prefati Geruas(ii) patris, et etiam Will(elm) i fratris sui primogeniti et ipsius Geruasii sigillatam (...) Dictus Geruasius aduersarius prefati abbatis cartam istam negauit dicens quod confirmationem istam nunquam fecerat, nec carte illi sigillum suum apposuerat, asserens quod si pater eius et frater*

- eius .W. primogenitus cartam illam fecerint, quod tempore illo quo carta illa facta fuit, sigillum non habebat neque etatem habebat ita quod factum eius finem deberet reportare ad usum et consuetudines Normann(ie). Gervase de Joué was one of the many heirs of Gervase de Montgaroult, his maternal grandfather, whose inheritance had been divided between four daughters.
- 33 *Postea amici nominati ad preceptum bailliui domini Regis dictum suum declarauerunt. qui d[ix]erunt, quod per inquisitionem super premissi[s] diligenter facta[m] certissime cognouerunt, quod dictus Geruas(ius), tempore illo quo carta predicta tribus sigillis sigillata, confecta fuit, etatem vincti et duorum annorum habebat, et quod carte illi sigillum suum apposuerat, et quod donationes et elemosinas in cartis illis contentas, gratas et ratas habuerat: sicut in carta illa continetur.*
- 34 ADC, H 6635: act of John *Le Sor* of Joué-du-Plain and his sons William and Gervase, ‘the sons of Mabel, daughter of Gervase of Montgaroult’ (s.d., late twelfth or early thirteenth century), with slits and tags for three lost seals.
- 35 ADC, H 6679 (concerning Samesle, for which, see above, n.23): *Ego uero, post obitum predicti Will(elm)i de Bouquetot mariti mei ... patronatum prefate ecclesie predictis monachis habendum et possidendum in perpetuam elemosinam, per propriam cartam meam confirmaui, sed sigillum qui tunc temporis habebam, me sciatis perdidisse.*
- 36 AN, L 974, no. 852: grant of *servitium equi* and other rights at Oisseau (dépt. Mayenne, cant. Mayenne) to Savigny; *eam presentis scripti et sigilli noui mei munimine, quoniam uetus sigillum meum in tempore guerre perdideram, roborauit.* The grant was confirmed by Juhel de Mayenne (AN, L 967, no. 139).
- 37 Manchester, John Rylands Library, R.48430/38/161 (grant to the abbey of Aunay, 1236): *Et quia sigillum meum antiquum mutauit de quo cartam unam sigillatam quondam eisdem feceram: presentem cartam sigillo meo nouo confirmare dignum duxi.* The earlier act and seal do not survive. For William (II) de Semilly, a scion of the Hommet dynasty, see D. Power, ‘The charters and letters of the Du Hommet constables of Normandy’, *Anglo-Norman Studies* XXXV, ed. D. Bates (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 259–86, at pp. 271, 285–6.
- 38 AN, L 969, no. 427 (William de Husson, knight, son of Guy d’Husson, concerning Fontaine-Étoupefour, CA, cant. Évreux, 1237): *In cuius elemosine testimonium, pro me et matre mea dicte abbacie dedi cartam meam sigillatam sigillo meo quod tunc habebam. quod sigillum non post multum temporis confregi, aliud qu(od) nouum fieri mihi feci (...). Ne igitur pro diuersitate sigillorum dicta elemosina mea impediri possit, ambo dicta sigilla*
- presentibus cartis meis appensa, mea propria fuisse recognoui et auocaui. Et ad maiorem certitudinem dicte recognitionis et auocationis mee, venerabilis Guill(elmus) de Teleolo tunc temporis Decanus de Valle Moreton’, una cum duobus dictis sigillis meis, presentibus cartis meis sigillum suum ad instanciam meam apposuit.* The act has parchment tags for two lost seals, either side of a much narrower leather tag for a third seal – presumably the dean’s. A thirteenth-century endorsement states that the act was not to be used in court except as proof of the seal, as the charter had been superseded by another: *Carta ista non debet ostendi nisi ad probandum sigillum quia habemus alteram in episcopatu Baiocensi pertinentem ad Thacon.* For William de Husson, see Power, *Norman frontier*, p. 506.
- 39 N. Civel, ‘Sceaux et armes de Simon comte de Leicester et de la maison de Montfort’, *Revue française d’héraldique et de sigillographie*, 66 (1996), pp. 83–106 (which follows the traditional, erroneous genealogy of the Montforts); *idem*, *La fleur de France*, pp. 262–4 (which follows the correct genealogy). For the Montforts as *grierii* of Yvelines, see Power, *Norman frontier*, p. 86 and n.27.
- 40 AN, L 969, no. 339 (Douët d’Arcq, iii, no. 10115).
- 41 Douët d’Arcq, i, no. 2625 (*Recueil des chartes de l’abbaye de Saint-Germain-des-Prés des origines au début du XIII^e siècle*, ed. R. Poupardin (2 vols, Paris, 1909–30), i, no. CCI (wrongly dated by Douët d’Arcq to c. 1216). For William Louvel (d. c. 1162), see Power, *Norman frontier*, pp. 226, 379, 396, 483.
- 42 BNF, ms. lat. 5464, I, no. 1 (temp. Rotrou archbishop of Rouen, 1164–83), calendared in *Sceaux de la Noë*, no. 2. This must be Richer II (d. 1176), not his son Richer III (d. 1183 x 87).
- 43 BNF, ms. lat. 5464, I, no. 4, reproduced in *Sceaux de la Noë*, no. 3.
- 44 J. H. Round, ‘The introduction of armorial bearings into England’, *Archaeological Journal* 51 (1894), 43–8; Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins*, p. 212.
- 45 A. R. Wagner, *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 14–15; *Complete Peerage*, xii, I, App. D; Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins*, pp. 211–12; *idem*, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain 1000–1300* (London, 1992), 223–34; however, Civel, *La fleur de France*, pp. 266–9, argues that these were not yet hereditary devices.
- 46 AN, J 216, Vernon, no. 1 (Douët d’Arcq, ii, nos 3862–3; *Layettes*, i, no. 441). For a photograph of Richard I de Vernon’s seal, formerly in the Archives de la Manche, see *Cartulaire de Jersey, Guernesey, et les autres Îles Normandes* (Jersey,

- 1919), ii, Planche VI (cf. pp. 390–1). Cf. AN, S 1498, no. 1 (Douët d'Arcq, ii, no. 3860), for the equestrian seal of Richard II's son William de Vernon, on which the horseman's arms on the obverse and the shield on the counterseal are both charged with a saltire (1236).
- 47 ADC, H 6515*bis* (act of 'William son of Count John', 1190 x 1203?), depicting a seal charged with three bendlets. *Recueil des actes des comtes de Pontieu (1026–1279)*, ed. C. Brunel (Paris, 1930), pp. lxxvii–lxxviii, 665, and pl. II, nos 4, 5, for Count William II of Ponthieu (acts of 1212–13 and 1221), with counterseals depicting *three bendlets within a bordure*. Both men were sometimes called William Talvas after their common ancestor William Talvas, count of Ponthieu (d. 1171). The counterseal of the equestrian second seal of Robert, count of Alençon, bore arms of *three bendlets, overall a canton*: AN, J 226, no. 2 (Douët d'Arcq, i, no. 885; *Layettes*, i, no. 988).
- 48 S.M. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm* (Manchester, 2003), pp. 122–51; cf. pp. 203–30 (catalogue).
- 49 *Le premier cartulaire de l'abbaye cistercienne de Pontigny (12^e–13^e siècles)*, ed. M. Garrigues (Paris, 1981), no. 6 (Auxerre, AD Yonne, H 1405).
- 50 *Sceaux de la Noë*, nos 5, 15, from BNF, ms. lat. 5464, I, nos 9 (first version, pre–1201), 39 and 83 (second version, 1203–7); P. Pacaud, 'Le sceau de Basilie de Glisolles', *Revue française d'héraldique et de sigillographie*, 64 (1994), pp. 91–104.
- 51 TNA, E 40/6865: the seal is a rounded oval (rather than vesica), with the image of a bird on a branch.
- 52 M. Six, 'De la Vicomtesse Emma et de son entourage', *Tabularia «Etudes»*, 4 (2004), 79–103, [<http://www.unicaen.fr/mrsh/craha/revue/tabularia/print.php?dossier=dossier3&file=04six.xml>], at pp. 90–1, 95. See Demay, nos 2078 (Geoffrey *filius vicecomitis*), 1711 (Matthew le Gros), 1710 (his sons Amaury and Roger le Gros); cf. Douët d'Arcq, ii, no. 4119 (Matilda la Grosse).
- 53 See the paper by Nicholas Vincent in this volume.
- 54 Power, *Norman frontier*, pp. 77, 135–6, 138. A damaged heraldic seal of Ralph l'Abbé (1205) survives in ADC, H 6611: its shield on the obverse bears *two croziers*, and the reverse depicts a man and woman facing each other. Acts of the l'Abbé family which have lost their seals include AN, S 5053^A (Ralph, 1206; Herbert, 1227); ADC, H 6599 (Herbert, 1220); ADO, H 1741 (Herbert, 1225).
- 55 E.g. Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins*, p. 212: the armorial counterseal of Robert IV, earl of Leicester, probably before his succession to the earldom in 1190.
- 56 *Sceaux de la Noë*, nos 4 (Thomas de St-Jean, 1180, 47 mm), 6 (Richard de Quatremare, 1190, 48 mm), 58 (Geoffrey le Blanc, 1218, 46 mm). Cf. P.D.A. Harvey and A. McGuinness, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (London, 1996), pp. 15–17, for comparable groups of seal matrices.
- 57 Demay's inventory lists over 1600 examples before 1300 from Norman archives and other collections, but these represent only a small proportion of the extant seals: in addition to those in the BNF, AN, and some other French repositories, not catalogued by Demay, we must include duplicates and those now in British and North American collections.
- 58 For discussion, see D. Power, 'L'établissement du régime capétien en Normandie', 1204: *La Normandie entre Plantagenêts et Capétiens*, ed. A. Flambard-Héricher and V. Gazeau (Caen, 2007), pp. 319–43, and the sources cited there.
- 59 Power, *Norman frontier*, pp. 450–1.
- 60 *Layettes*, i, no. 716; *Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste, roi de France*, ed. H.-F. Delaborde et al. (6 vols, 1916–2006), ii, no. 803. The knights in the Rouen garrison in 1204 included three of the jurors of 1205, namely Henry d'Étouteville, Robert d'Esneval, and Thomas de Pavilly, and they were commanded by Peter de Préaux, whose brothers John and William were jurors in 1205.
- 61 *Layettes*, i, no. 785: the text begins *nos juravimus super sacrosancta quod iura que Henricus et Ricardus, quondam reges Anglie, habuerunt in Normannia adversus clerum, et apud Lexovium et alibi, et iura nostra diceremus*, and includes a clause concerning the pleas of the sword in the *banleuca* of Lisieux. After 1204 French royal scribes inserted a copy of King John's resolution of his dispute with the bishopric over the pleas of sword into the first royal register (*Registres de Philippe Auguste*, pp. 481–2, *Carte*, no. 36).
- 62 J. W. Baldwin, 'Philip Augustus and the Norman Church', *French Historical Studies*, vi (1969), 1–30; *idem.*, *The Government of Philip Augustus: foundations of French royal power in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1986), pp. 318–26.
- 63 Baldwin, 'Norman Church', pp. 12–26; *idem.*, *The Government of Philip Augustus*, pp. 317–28, where he argues that concessions made by Richard I to the church in 1190 were rolled back by Philip Augustus, who thereby recovered powers exercised by Henry II.
- 64 *Et quia iura domini regis et nostra nobis memorie non occurrebant, et quia quidam de baronibus Normannie presentes non erant, decrevimus inter nos quod ad aliam*

- diem conveniremus et barones absentes advocaremus, si domino regi placeret, et tunc jura domini regis et nostra, que hic scripta non sunt, per sacramentum nostrum scriberemus.*
- 65 Baldwin, 'Norman Church', pp. 14–30.
- 66 The act bears the fourteenth-century endorsement, *Testimonium plurimorum Baronum super Jure patronatus et presentacionibus ecclesiarum Normannie dat(um) mense nouembr(i) m^o. CC^o. v^o.*
- 67 A letter of 41 leading French barons to Pope Gregory IX in 1235 (AN, J 350, no. 3: *Layettes*, ii, no. 2404) has a *plica* on each side of the document as well as the foot, with slits for 41 seals (9 down each side, 23 along the foot), of which 18 survive.
- 68 Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide*, p. 18, pl. 16. It is unlikely that this method was being used in France as early as 1205.
- 69 *Cartulaire Normand*, no. 124 (notice only; cf. *Catalogue des actes de Philippe Auguste*, no. 961, for a more scientific notice).
- 70 See Appendix. Roger de Meulan's seal is now detached.
- 71 *Registres de Philippe Auguste*, p. 56, explicitly states that the act still had 13 seals in 1992, but it is more likely that this statement was relying upon Teulet's edition.
- 72 Teulet assumed that the 'William du Hommet' in the document was William II (d. 1240), constable of Normandy, rather than his grandfather of the same name; but the date of William I's death is uncertain. See below, p. 43.
- 73 F. M. Powicke, *The Loss of Normandy 1189–1204: Studies in the History of the Angevin Empire* (2nd edn, Manchester, 1961), p. 332; *Liber Feodorum: the Book of Fees commonly called Testa de Nevill* (3 vols, London, 1920–31), i, 88–90, 238; ii, 754, 1431. The uncertainty over his English lands stems from the difficulty of distinguishing him from his cousin William Martel (d. 1224) of Tattenhoe (Bucks.).
- 74 Demay, nos 550 (Aude d'Auffay, lady of Tancarville, 1273: armorial counterseal), p. 551 (William de Tancarville, 1283). Both depict eight rather than six estoiles on their arms. For the Tancarvilles, see A. Deville, *Histoire du château et des sires de Tancarville* (Rouen, 1834); Powicke, *The Loss of Normandy*, p. 353; for their English lands, *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, ed. T. D. Hardy (2 vols, London, 1833–44), i, pp. 9, 37; *Calendar of Charter Rolls* (6 vols, London, 1903–27), i, pp. 77, 132.
- 75 Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, pp. 334–5; Baldwin, *Government of Philip Augustus*, p. 217; Power, *Norman frontier*, pp. 252, 277, 419, 486. For Stephen's background, see D. Balfour, 'The origins of the Longchamp family', *Medieval Prosopography*, xviii (1997), pp. 73–92.
- 76 *Dictionary of British Arms: Medieval Ordinary*, ed. D. H. B. Chesshyre *et al.* (3 vols, London, 1992–2009), iii, pp. 86, 90–1. A crescent and estoile also appear on the seal of Stephen's brother, Bishop William: see the article by Adrian Ailes in this volume.
- 77 For the Préaux brothers, see Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, pp. 341, 350; *The History of William Marshal*, ed. A. J. Holden, S. Gregory, and D. Crouch (3 vols, London, 2002–6), i, lines 4662–74; *The History of the Holy War: Ambroise's Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*, ed. and trans. M. Ailes and M. Barber (2 vols, Woodbridge, 2003), e.g. i, lines 4729–30 ('des compaignons reials'); ii, p. 97.
- 78 *Ibid.*, i, lines 7108–24, 12228–34; ii, pp. 128, 192.
- 79 *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium in Turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. T.D. Hardy (London, 1835), p. 36; *Great Roll of the Pipe for the Fifth Year of the Reign of King John*, ed. D. M. Stenton (London, 1938), p. 79. The evidence concerning the succession of Okehampton in the 1200s is too complex to be discussed here.
- 80 Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, pp. 341–2.
- 81 Douët d'Arcq, ii, no. 3303, describes the elbow of each of the eagle's wings as ending in a lion's muzzle.
- 82 Douët d'Arcq, ii, no. 3305: Peter's shield-shaped seal, c. 48 mm across (AN, J 213, Rouen, II, no. 2: *Layettes*, i, no. 716). Cf. ii, no. 3306, and Demay, no. 483, for the armorial seal of another Peter, a successor of John as lord of Préaux (1294, 1303), likewise charged with an eagle displayed. In 1247 Enguerrand, son of John de Préaux's youngest brother Enguerrand (who had remained in England after 1204), was using a seal with an eagle passant to sinister regardant (TNA, DL 25/215).
- 83 Power, *Norman frontier*, pp. 278, 428.
- 84 Defender of Verneuil for Richard (1194): Cambridge University Library, ms. li.vi.24, fol. 46v (in a prose history of the dukes of Normandy); *History of William Marshal*, ii, lines 10472–80. Defender of Arques for King John (1202): *ibid.*, ii, lines 12051–4. See Powicke, *The Loss of Normandy*, pp. 101, 152, 347; for his English lands, lost in 1204, see *Rot. Claus.*, i, p. 6.
- 85 ADSM, 9 H 30 (cf. Demay, no. 422, which does not mention the counterseal): grant to the abbey of St-Léonard-de-Chaumes (Aug. 1224).
- 86 *Early Yorkshire Charters*, vi, pp. 24–7.
- 87 Douët d'Arcq, ii, no. 3146: *Pierre gravée. Une femme assise sur une chaise à dossier, tendant à un personnage debout devant elle un objet indistinct.*
- 88 AN, J 395, no. 91 (*Layettes*, ii, no. 2129). Douët d'Arcq, ii, no. 3147, assumed that the two seals

- belonged to the same man, but Fulk II had been succeeded by Fulk III by 1230 (*EYC*, vi, 24–9). Fulk III's tiny counterseal depicted a beast (probably a lion) passant to sinister.
- 89 The seal on a chirograph concerning the honour of the Vallée de la Sée (Manche), recording a concord between Fulk II Paynel and Roger (de Lacy), constable of Chester, a few years earlier (TNA, DL 25/43, 1198 x 1203), has been assumed to be Fulk's (*Early Yorkshire Charters*, vi, no. 20 and pl. iii); but although its inscription has been lost, its geometric design corresponds to Roger de Lacy's counterseal (see BL, Harley Charter 52.H.43A, repr. in Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide*, p. 52).
- 90 Robert d'Esneval was still under age in 1197–8, when his mother Heloise had custody of his father's land, but he was of age by 9 June 1202: *Magni Rotuli Scaccarii Normannie*, ed. T. Stapleton (2 vols, London, 1840–44), ii, pp. cxlvii, 444 (cf. i, pp. 133, 139, 157, for Heloise's custody in 1194–5); *Rot. Norm.*, p. 48.
- 91 Esneval, SM, cant. and cne. Pavilly (variously *Vesneval*, *Wendeval*, etc.). For Robert, see *RHF*, xxiii, pp. 614*b*, 643*de*, 684*g*, 707*g*, 728*f*; Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, 338; *Layettes*, i, no. 716 (surrender of Rouen), where Teulet renders his surname as *Hivesneval*, although *Huiesneval* seems more likely. In 1172 Robert's father had 12¼ knights in his service and owed 3 knights; Tancarville's father had 94¾ and owed 10 knights.
- At an unknown date Robert and Heloise issued acts concerning her Norfolk property (BL, ms. Cotton Claudius D.xiii, fols 19v–20r); in 1233 Henry III promised that Robert might inherit Heloise's English lands after her death, but after Robert's own death in 1247 his lands in Norfolk, Suffolk and Kent were confiscated (*Calendar of the Charter Rolls of Henry III*, i (1226–1257) (London, 1903), pp. 175, 329; *Close Rolls of the reign of Henry III, 1247–1251* (London, 1922), p. 11).
- 92 ADC, H 667 (s.d., but the act's hand suggests post-1220); AN, J 395, no. 92 (1235); BL, Seals xxxix.64 (detached). I intend to publish reproductions of the Hommet seals in my edition of the Hommet charters (currently in preparation for the Pipe Roll Society).
- 93 ADC, H 667: act of *Will(elmus) de Humeto filius Ricardi iunioris de Humeto constab(ularius) Norma(n)nie*, dated '1204' (i.e. Christmas 1203 x Easter 1205, depending upon the dating system used). William II had come of age by 1200–1, when he inherited the land of his deceased parents, with his grandfather the constable as surety (*Rot. Norm.*, p. 39).
- 94 ADC, H 667: an act of Jordan, bishop of Lisieux, for Aunay, refers to his father William I du Hommet as 'Brother William' (c. 1204). William I's father Richard I du Hommet had certainly retired to Aunay in 1178–9. The Capetian chancery did not always accord the title of constable to the head of the Hommet dynasty.
- 95 *RHF*, xxiii, pp. 611*jk*, 619*a*; *Rot. Norm.*, p. 129; *Rot. Claus.*, i, p. 7; *Rot. Chart.*, 163*b* (Essex, Hants., Oxon.).
- 96 For Roger, see D. Power, 'L'aristocratie Plantagenêt face aux conflits capétiens-angevins: l'exemple du traité de Louviers', *Noblesses de l'espace Plantagenêt (1154–1224)*, ed. M. Aurell (Poitiers, 2001), pp. 121–37, at pp. 129–30.
- 97 AN, J 394, no. 2*bis* (*Layettes*, i, no. 440); Douët d'Arcq, i, no. 2833.
- 98 AN, J 216, no. 7 (*Layettes*, i, no. 736), an act of Roger de Meulan in favour of the king of France (Easter 1204 x Easter 1205); Douët d'Arcq, i, no. 2834. For the seals of Roger's descendants, see *ibid.*, i, nos 2826–32; the lion was sometimes *queue fourchée*, like their kinsmen the lords of Montfort-l'Amaury, or *reguardant*. Cf. Civel, *La fleur de France*, pp. 125, 266–8; Power, *Norman frontier*, pp. 453, 509.
- 99 *Early Yorkshire Charters*, ix, pp. 51–5.
- 100 Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, pp. 352–3 (lands in Kent, Gloucs. and Notts.).
- 101 Douët d'Arcq, ii, no. 3679, describes this as 'Un fascé de diapré et d'hermines de six pièces', i.e. *barry of six of diaper and ermine*, but the 'ermine' looks more like roundels charged with fleurs-de-lys than ermine spots. However, later arms attributed to the Taisson family were *barry of six vert and ermine*.
- 102 Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, p. 338; Power, *Norman frontier*, p. 316; BNF, ms. lat. 13905, fol. 51v; ADE, H 846.
- 103 For canting symbols on Norman seals, see above, p. 38. *Complete Peerage*, iv, 190 (note *d*), states that later heralds attributed arms of *sable, six horseshoes argent* (or vice versa) to the twelfth-century earls of Derby, but this 'English' branch of the Ferrières family subsequently used *vairy or and gules*.
- 104 Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, p. 337.
- 105 Douët d'Arcq, i, no. 1891, identified it as a *tarasque*, or mythical Provençal dragon, but it could equally be a hound.
- 106 H. Malo, *Un grand feudataire, Renaud de Dammartin, et la coalition de Bouvines* (Paris, 1898), remains a valuable study of his career.
- 107 Cf. Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide*, pp. 52–3.
- 108 Douët d'Arcq, i, no. 1059 (from AN, J 238, no. 1; *Layettes*, i, no. 750). For another example of Renaud's seal, see San Marino (California),

- Henry E. Huntington Library, HAD 3502, which also bears a fine example of the seal of his wife Countess Ida of Boulogne, with a typical feminine figure on the obverse, and a counterseal comprising the arms of Boulogne (*three roundels*, most probably *tourteaux*, i.e. roundels *gules*) inverted above the arms of Dammartin (see above), the two shields together forming a waisted oval (cf. Douët d'Arcq, i, no. 1058, describing Ida's seal from AN, J 238 no.1, i.e. *Layettes*, i, no. 613). The *bordure* of the Dammartin arms is clearer on Renaud's and Ida's counterseals than on the equestrian obverse of Renaud's seal.
- 109 ADC, F 5690, fol. 128v; Demay, no. 541. I am grateful to Richard Allen for providing me with photographs of both the extant photograph and the *moulage*. An extant act of William de Serans (1189–90) has lost its seal (ADC, H 6635).
- 110 D. Power, 'Between the Angevin and Capetian courts: John de Rouvray and the knights of the Pays de Bray, 1180–1225', in K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics*, (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 361–84. Peter de Préaux was the commander of the Rouen garrison, and John's elder brother Osbert was one of the knights in the city (Power, 'L'établissement du régime capétien', p. 330 n. 49).
- 111 *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Notre-Dame de Vaux-de-Cernay*, ed. L. Merlet and A. Moutié (2 vols, Paris, 1857), i, no. CCCI (Aug. 1229), describing the seal design as *à l'écu burelé de ... au lion de ... brochant sur le tout*. The counterseal apparently bore a shield with the same arms. The original (Montigny-le-Bretonneux, Archives des Yvelines, 45 H 12, no. 17) now bears only traces of green wax on its seal tag. I am grateful to Mathilde Geley for sending me a reproduction of this act.
- A seal of John de Rouvray from an act dated 1215 is catalogued in 'Collection supplément : sceaux des Archives nationales non repérés par Douët d'Arcq, sceaux d'autres services publics ou collections particulières. Cahier d'entrée ms.', ed. L. Douët d'Arcq *et al.* (typescript, 4 vols, 1870–1999), ii, nos 2686, 2686bis; it was allegedly in the former AD Seine-et-Oise, so may also survive in the AD Yvelines. The catalogue entry appears to represent the two sides of a single seal.
- 112 *Recueil des chartes et pièces relatives au prieuré Notre-Dame de Moulineaux et à la châtellenie de Poigny*, ed. A. Moutié (Paris, 1846), p. xcii: act of Henry de Rouvray, lord of Auffargis (1250): the seal is described as *sur un écu triangulaire burelé de huit pièces, un lion rampant à gauche* [i.e. to dexter], *lampassé, vilainé et la queue fourchée, brochant sur le tout*. John de Rouvray had received Auffargis and Poigny, in the Forest of Yvelines, from Philip Augustus in 1197 (*Recueil des actes de Philippe Auguste*, ii, no. 556). ADSM, 16 H 183 (Demay, no. 501): act of a later John de Rouvray, lord of Grainville-en-Vexin (1280), with an equestrian seal depicting *barruly, a lion rampant* on the shield and horse-trappings; the counterseal shows a shield with arms of *barruly of 14, a lion rampant*. According to the Wijnbergen armorial roll (mid-1280s?), this John de Rouvray bore *barry of 14 or and azure, a lion rampant gules* (P. Adam-Even and L. Jéquier, 'Un armorial français du XIII^e siècle. L'armorial Wijnberghen. Part III', *Archives héraldiques suisses* 66 (1952), I, 28–36, at p. 32 no. 362); cf. p. 35 no. 439 (giving *barry of 16*).
- 113 BNF, ms. lat. 5425, p.119: equestrian, with arms of *barruly* on the horseman's shield. John's addition of a lion *queue fourchée* to this coat probably reflects his early acquisitions in the Forest of Yvelines, adjacent to the lands of the lords of Montfort-l'Amaury, whose lion *queue fourchée* was widely adopted in the region (Civel, 'Sceaux et armes de Simon comte de Leicester'; *idem, La fleur de France*, pp. 266–8).
- In 1255, however, the equestrian seal of another John de Rouvray, lord of Écalles – probably Osbert's descendant – had a heraldic counterseal bearing *a cross charged with five scallops* (ADSM, 14 H 714; Demay, no. 500). These were apparently the same arms as the castellans of Beauvais in the 14th century: A. Caix de St-Aymour, 'Les châtelains de Beauvais', *Mémoires et documents pour servir à l'histoire des pays qui forment aujourd'hui le Département de l'Oise* (Paris, 1898), pp. 79–126, at pp. 87n., 96 and n.1, 97–8, 101. The gaps in our knowledge of the Rouvray and Beauvais genealogies prevent any certainty, but it is possible that the later castellans were descended from the senior Rouvray branch. The origins of the arms with the cross and scallops are unknown.
- 114 ADC, H 1193 (grant for the abbey of Aunay, c. 1200).
- 115 O. Guyotjeannin, *Episcopus et comes: affirmation et déclin de la seigneurie épiscopale au nord du royaume de France (Beauvais-Noyon, X^e – début XIII^e siècle)* (Geneva and Paris, 1987), pp. 113–15, 148–9, 264.
- 116 For Odo, see Caix de St-Aymour, 'Les châtelains de Beauvais', pp. 87–9 (identifying two Odos, father and son, between 1161 and 1219); Guyotjeannin, *Episcopus et Comes*, pp. 148–9 (who treats 'Odo the castellan' as a single person between those dates). For the castellans' Norman concerns before 1204, see BM Rouen, Y 13, fol. 96r (Odo or his father

- as benefactor of the abbey of Foucarmont, 1164); ADE, H 395 (Odo witnesses an act for the abbey of Île-Dieu, pre-1194); *Cartulaire de l'abbaye bénédictine de Saint-Pierre-de-Préaux (1034-1227)*, ed. D. Rouet (Paris, 2005), pp. 342–3, 422–3, nos B112, B190 (which must be pre-1219). In 1238 the land of the castellan of Beauvais in the diocese of Rouen yielded 60 *li. tournois* (RHF, xxi, p. 255d).
- 117 Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, p. 350; W.B. Stevenson, 'England and Normandy 1204–59' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds, 1974), pp. 455–7; *Curia Regis Rolls, Richard I–Henry III* (20 vols. to date, London, 1922–), xvi, nos 1397, 1758.
- 118 ADSM, 2 H 63, no. 53. I wish to thank John Stevenson for providing me with a reproduction of this act.
- 119 Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide*, p. 20.
- 120 RHF, xxiii, pp. 682–4 (*Registres de Philippe Auguste*, pp. 327–35). *Comites*: the count of Boulogne (who also appears as 'the count of Mortain and Aumale'). *Barones*: Fulk Paynel, (William du Hommet) the constable of Normandy, and Ralph Taisson; the only other Norman in this group was the 'lord of Orbec and Longueville', i.e. the absent William Marshal. *Castellani*: [John] the lord of Préaux; and William the lord of Tancarville, the 'lord of La Queue'(-en-Brie?) may well refer to Roger de Meulan. *Vavassores*: Henry de Ferrières, William de Préaux, [Robert] the lord of Courcy, and William de Mortemer. Omitted: Étoutteville, Longchamps, Martel, Montagny, Coulonces, Vassy, Esneval, Rouvray, Pavilly, Serans, and the castellan of Beauvais.
- 121 RHF, xxiii, p. 684 (*Registres*, pp. 308–10): [William du Hommet] constable of Normandy, Ralph Taisson, Fulk Paynel, Philip de Vassy, Robert de Courcy, Henry de Ferrières, John and William de Préaux, William de Mortemer, [William] chamberlain of Tancarville, the heir of William Martel, John de Rouvray, Henry d'Étoutteville, Thomas de Pavilly, Stephen de Longchamps, Robert d'Esneval, Nicholas de Montagny, Hugh de Coulonces. Roger de Meulan may be the 'Roger de la Queue' (-en-Brie?) (*Rogerus de Cauda*) who appears in the list of French knights. The count of Boulogne headed the list of the knights of Boulogne. William de Serans and the castellan of Beauvais were not mentioned.
- 122 Philip de Vassy, Nicholas de Montagny, John de Rouvray, Odo castellan of Beauvais, William de Serans, Roger de Meulan.
- 123 For Roger's brother Count Robert of Meulan, see Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, pp. 344–5. Roger's sister Isabella was married into the Anglo-Manceau family of Mayenne. For John's brothers Osbert and William in Warks. (1203) and Northants. (1200) respectively, see *Rotuli de Liberate ac de Misis et Præstitis*, ed. T. D. Hardy (London, 1844), p. 74; BL, Add. Ch. 6109.

The images used here are published with the permission of the Archives de la Seine-Maritime (Fig. 3.11), the Archives du Calvados (Fig. 3.25), and the Archives Nationales de France (all other figures).

Appendix 3.1: The seals on the declaration concerning the Norman Church (13 Nov. 1205)

Paris, Archives Nationales, J 210, no. 2, edited in *Layettes du Trésor des Chartes*, ed. A. Teulet (5 vols, Paris, 1863–1909), i, no. 785.
The numbers in bold after the names indicate the order in which the names appear in the text.

- d: down
a: across
t: thick (excluding moulded figures)
underlined: letters reversed on inscription
- ADC: Archives départementales du Calvados (Caen)
ADSM: Archives départementales de la Seine-Maritime (Rouen)
AN: Archives Nationales (Paris)
TNA: The National Archives (Kew)

Douët d’Arcq: *Archives de l’Empire. Collection de Sceaux*, ed. L. Douët d’Arcq (3 vols, Paris, 1863–8)

Table 3.1: inventory of seals (extant and lost)

Sealer	Douët d’Arcq no.	size (mm, approx.)	shape	design	inscription	counter-seal	other known exemplars
A. EXTANT SEALS (INTERLACED GROUP ON LEFT)							
William Martel (2)	i, no. 2722	26d×30a×3t	rounded oval (horizontal)	equestrian (to sinister), carrying a hawk	+ SE[C]RET ^o WILL ^o MARTEL (privy seal)	x	
William chamberlain of Tancarville (4)		55d×55a (now 55d× 35a×3t)	round (damaged)	6 estoiles around an orle	I DE TA.....LA		
	i, no. 325	21d×21a (counterseal)	round	an estoile	SIGILL ^o : S..RETI	✓	
Stephen de Longchamps (14)	i, no. 2608	40d×36a×3t	rounded oval	a crescent and star	+ SIG.....TEFANI D.....AMPO	x	
William de Préaux (17)		60d×60a (now 48d×38a×3t)	round	an eagle displayed (with lion muzzles at each ‘elbow’)	WILERMI DE.....	x	
	ii, no. 3303						
Nicholas de Montagny (20)	i, no. 2920	28d×28a×3t	round	armorial: 4 bendlets, overall a canton charged with a roundel	+ SIGILL ^o NI.....AI DE MONTEINI	x	

B. EXTANT SEALS (INTERLACED GROUP ON RIGHT)

William de Mortemer (9)	i, no. 2987	40d×40a (now 40d×35a ×4t)	round	Hercules (or similar Classical figure with club)	 DE MORTEMER	ADSM, 9 H 30 (Aug. 1224) ¹	✕
Fulk Paynel (12)	ii, no. 3146	35d×45a×4t	rounded oval (horizontal)	standing figure presenting a bowl (?) to a seated figure	+ SECRETVM : FVLCONIS: PAGANELLI (privy seal)	Cf. his son Fulk (1231): AN, J 395, no. 31 (Douët d'Arcq, ii, no. 3147)	✕
Robert d'Esneval (16)	ii, no. 3959	55d×55a×3t	round	armorial: paly of 22, a chief	+ SIGILLVM: ROBERTI WENE..AL (now ..GILLVM: ROBERTI V....AL)		✕
unidentified (fragment) ²	- - -	65–70? (now 32d× 22a×3t)	round ?	equestrian (to sinister)	ETO (?).....		✓
		40? (now 22: counter- seal)	round?	head and neck of small figure?	OS (?).....		

C. EXTANT SEALS (DETACHED)

John de Préaux (6)	ii, no. 3304	70d×70a (now 48d× 40a×3t)	round	equestrian (to dexter) with sword and shield charged with eagle displayed	...GILLVM IO..... (nowIO.....)		✓
		20d×15a (counter- seal)	oval (vesica)	an eagle displayed, head turned to sinister	S' IEHANNIS DE PRATELLIS (now S' IEHANNIS DE PRA...IIS)		
Hugh de Coulonces (15)	i, no. 1925	50d×50a×4t	round	armorial: fretty, a sinister canton	+ SIGILL: SIGILLVM hVGONIC MECOLVNSI		✕

Roger de Meulan (22)	i, no. 2834	60d×60a (now 55d× 43a×3t)	round	armorial: lion rampant	(now SIGILL' [SIGILLVM hVG VNSl) + SIGILLVM ROGERI DE MEVLENDO (nowGERI DE MEVLENDO)	AN, J 216, no.7 (Douët d'Arcq) ✕ (1204) ³
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D. LOST SINCE 1863, BUT KNOWN FROM MOULAGES

Henry d'Étouteville (3)	i, no. 2114	65d×65a	round	armorial: barry, a lion rampant to sinister	+ SIGILLVM (<i>sic</i>) hENRICI DE ET TOTEVILA	✕
Ralph Taisson (5)	ii, no. 3679	70d×70a	round	armorial (barry of six, with diaper 1, 3, 5) between estoile and crescent moon, and “RT”	SIGILLV . ADVLF. ...SV.	✕
Henry de Ferrières (7)	i, no. 2151	65d×65a 23d×23a (counter- seal)	round round	armorial: escutcheon between 6 horseshoes a horseshoe	+ SIGILLVM : hENRICI : DE F.RRARIIS : S' S̄CRETVM h' D' F	 ✓
Robert de Courcy (10)	i, no. 1891	60d×60a	round	equestrian (to sinister) with sword; a creature (<i>tarasque?</i>) beneath the horse	+ SIGILLVM ROBERTI DIO	✕

E. LOST SINCE 1863, BUT KNOWN FROM OTHER EXAMPLES

Renaud, count of Boulogne (1)	i, no. 1059	[Douët d'Arcq: 75 mm; Hunt. Lib.: c. 80 mm]	round	equestrian (to dexter) with sword and shield charged with barry of six (arms of Dammartin)	SIG.....NALDI : COMITIS : BOLONIE	e.g. AN, J 238, nos 5 (Douët d'Arcq; Feb. 1205), 46 (Sept. 1208); San Marino CA,
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				armorial: barry of six	SECRETVM : REINALDI : (<i>vis</i>) COM... ..LONIE	✓	Huntington Lib., HAD 3502 (s.d.)
William de Serans (11)				equestrian (to sinister) with sword	SIGILLVM WILLELMI DE SERANS	✗	Demay, <i>Im. Seaux Norm.</i> , no. 541 (s.d.) (also mould in AN): ADC, F 5690, fol. 128v (photo of AD Manche Série H, Savigny, destroyed 1944)
William I or William II du Hommet (13) ⁵				equestrian (to sinister) with sword	SIGILLVM WILLELMI DE HUMETIS (composite)	✗	ADSM, 24 HP 76 (s.d.); TNA, DL 27/26 (s.d.)
				equestrian (to sinister) with sword and shield bearing barry of 4 (?) between 4 roundels (?) ⁶	SIGILLVM WILLI D..... CONESTABVL'	✓	AN, J 395, no. 92 (Douët d'Arcq) (1235);
				equestrian (to dexter) with lance and Roman (?) helmet	+ VVILELIMI (<i>vis</i>) DE hVMETO		ADC, H 667 (s.d.); BL, Seals xxxix.64 (s.d.)
John de Rouvray (18)				armorial: barruly, a lion rampant	IO...E ROVREL...	✓	<i>Ctl. Vaux-de- Cernay</i> , i, no. CCCI (Aug. 1229) (formerly attached to AD Yvelines, 45 H 12 no.17)
				armorial: same arms	SECRETUM ...		

G. LOST BEFORE 1863, AND NOT KNOWN FROM ELSEWHERE⁷

Philip de Vassy (8)

Odo, castellan of Beauvais (19)

Thomas de Pavilly (21)

¹ This later seal bears the inscription + SIGILL' WILL[ELM]i DE MORTMER; 39d x 37a x 10t. Counterseal: a beast statant facing sinister, possibly a bear. Inscription: + MEVM SECRETVM MICHI.

² As argued in the text, most probably an otherwise unknown first seal for William II du Hommet (with the "ETO" as all that remains of "SIGILLVM WILLELMI DE HVMETO CONSTABULARII" or similar), closer in size to the seal of his grandfather William I. Alternatively, it could be the seal of one of the three barons whose seal designs are not known, namely Philip de Vassy, Odo, castellan of Beauvais, and Thomas de Pavilly. The inscription and image on the counterscal have not been explained.

³ For Roger's earlier seal (Jan. 1196), depicting a lion passant to sinister, see AN, J 394, no. 2*bis* (Douët d'Arcq, i, no. 2833; *L'ajettes*, i, no. 440).

⁴ Measurements kindly supplied by Richard Allen from the *moulage* in the AN.

⁵ It is possible that the fragmentary unidentified seal described above was the seal of William II du Hommet (see above, Group B, 4th seal listed).

⁶ The arms of Hommet were usually depicted as *argent, a bordure gules bezanty*. However, early versions do sometimes include bars as well, and the roundels here may be a representation in profile of the bordure bezanty.

⁷ One of these may have been the unidentified seal for which a fragment survives (see above: right side, 4th seal listed), but it is argued above that this may have been from an otherwise unknown first seal of William II du Hommet.

⁸ In 1863 Teulet (*L'ajettes*, i, no. 785) stated that 13 seals were surviving, namely 7 (left) and 6 (right); but Douët d'Arcq (*Collection des Sceaux*, i and ii, publ. 1863 and 1867) records 14 seals, of which 11 survive today and another three are known from *moulares*. Douët d'Arcq also described Roger de Meulan's seal from another exemplar, although it survives, though detached, for the Rouen declaration. However, the extant fragment described above (right side, 4th seal) must count as a 16th seal, since it is not described in Douët d'Arcq's catalogue. All or some of the three seals that are now detached may have been amongst those still attached in 1863.

Table 3.2: Survival of the seals

Position	1205	1852	1863 ¹	2012
Left Bunch	11 (presumed)	{ 17 }	7	5
Right Bunch	11 (presumed)		6	3 (+ 1 frag/)
Detached	–		not known	3
Not known	–		2 (+ 1 frag.?)	–
Total	22	17	15 (+ 1 frag.?)	11 (+ 1 frag.)

¹In 1863 Teulet (*L'ajettes*, i, no. 785) stated that 13 seals were surviving, namely seven (left) and six (right); but Douët d'Arcq (*Collection des Sceaux*, i and ii, publ. 1863 and 1867) records 14 seals, of which 11 survive today and another three are known from *moulages*. Douët d'Arcq also described Roger de Meulan's seal from another exemplar, although it survives, though detached, for the Rouen declaration. However, the extant fragment described above (right side, 4th seal) must count as a 16th seal, since it is not described in Douët d'Arcq's catalogue. All or some of the three seals that are now detached may have been amongst those still attached in 1863.

Making an impression: Seals as signifiers of individual and collective rank in the upper aristocracy in England and the Empire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries¹

Jörg Peltzer

In his summa *De arte prosandi*, composed 1275/76, Konrad of Mure makes his statement, well-known at least among sigillographers, that the *intitulatio* of a written document on the one hand, and the legend and motif of the seal attached to that document on the other, need to conform. It would be absurd, he explains, if someone who styled himself bishop or abbot appended a seal showing a knight or a lion and sporting a legend referring to a count or indeed, vice versa.² Konrad's point is that there must not be any discrepancy between the name of the issuer of the charter and the bearer of the seal confirming that charter. But his example also demonstrates that the motif of a seal corresponds at least to some extent to the identity of its bearer. The knight and the lion are identified as typical symbols of secular noblemen.

This paper takes a closer look at the link between the design of a seal and its noble bearer. The focus is directed on the (large) seals of the English earls and the Imperial princes in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.³ To what extent and in which way did these seals convey princely or comital rank? What

do the seals reveal about the degree of social differentiation among the higher aristocracy in the respective realms? In trying to answer these questions this article can build on the substantial advances made in research on aristocratic seals in recent years and some of what follows will be familiar to scholars of either the English or the Imperial seals.⁴ By comparing the English and the German seals the various ways in which they could be deployed to indicate their bearers' rank will become more clearly visible. The analysis will start with the seals' physical appearance, then move to their circumscriptions and finally to their design.

Neither the material nor the colour of their seals distinguished Imperial princes and English earls from other nobles in their respective realms. Their seals were made of wax and appeared in varying colours (for example, uncoloured, red or green) just like the seals of other aristocrats. The picture is slightly different if we look at the seal size. Size mattered. A systematic analysis of the size of all surviving English and Imperial seals has not yet been undertaken, but some tentative

conclusions can be drawn. In England the seals of the earls were not set apart in size from those of the barons. The barons' letter to the pope of 1301 amply demonstrates this. That a powerful baron like Henry de Percy had an equestrian seal the same size as comital ones may not come as a surprise, but he was not the only one. Theobald de Verdun or John St John of Hahnaker also used equestrian seals that could easily rival those of the earls.⁵ By contrast, the equestrian seals of earls and barons were notably larger than those of mere knights. Here, a difference in rank can literally be measured.⁶

In the Empire, too, size varied according to rank. We can identify a dividing line, albeit a fine one, between the Imperial princes and the other aristocrats. The equestrian seals of one of the most prominent princely families, the Wittelsbach counts palatine of the Rhine, for example, were larger than those of the non-princely counts in their neighbourhood in the south-west of the Empire. Between 1214, the year in which the Wittelsbach dukes of Bavaria were invested with the palatinate, and 1400, the year in which Rupert III was elected king of the Romans, the palatine equestrian seals had diameters between 80 and 95 mm – with the exception of one seal of Otto II, in use between 1229 and 1231 and which measured 75 mm.⁷ Their immediate territorial neighbours were the margraves of Baden.⁸ Both Hermann V (d. 1242/3) and his son Rudolf I (d. 1288) were accorded princely rank by their contemporaries. Their seals measured roughly 75–88 mm. Their successors, however, in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries no longer figured among the Imperial princes. Now we find a neat difference in size between their seals and those of the counts palatine: 60–70 mm was usually the diameter.⁹

This mechanism also worked in the opposite direction. When in 1336 the count of Juliers was awarded the title of a margrave and elevated to the rank of an Imperial prince,¹⁰ he had a new seal made. Measuring 95 mm, this equestrian seal was notably larger than his previous comital one (81 mm). By 1354 he had replaced it with an even larger seal of 97 mm. This was exactly the size of the seal of his neighbour, duke Rainald II of Guelders. Before his promotion to the dignity of a duke and Imperial prince in 1339¹¹ Rainald had used smaller equestrian seals. The first

one had measured 80 mm, the second one 88 mm.¹² Yet, the promotion to Imperial dignity did not require an increase of the seal's size. When another magnate of the lower Rhine, Wilhelm, count of Berg, became duke and Imperial prince in 1380¹³ he had a new seal cut, but it was of the same size as his previous comital one (80 mm).¹⁴

These examples show not only the importance accorded to the size of seals as signifiers of rank, they also demonstrate that no fixed rule prescribing the size of comital and princely seals existed. Regional competition appears to have set the standards. In England, too, the regulation of the size of the seals was left to the mechanism of social control. No equivalent of the sumptuary law of 1363 was put in place for seals.¹⁵ As a consequence the size of the seals could be used to express social ambitions on both sides of the Channel. In 1262, the royal proctor at the papal court, John of Hemmingford, was asked *indigner* why Henry III's new great seal was larger than the one he used when he had also been duke of Normandy; this, so John was told, was improper.¹⁶ Henry was obviously trying to make up for the loss of his continental dominions confirmed by the treaty of Paris in 1259. But, obviously, not everyone bought into this. Half a century later, the seal of Thomas, earl of Lancaster, was about a centimetre larger than that of King Edward II. Allegedly contemporaries thought that this 'oversize' revealed Thomas' treacherous intentions towards Edward.¹⁷ This interpretation certainly takes it too far, but Thomas doubtlessly intended to show that he was more than a mere earl.¹⁸ A similar case happened in the Empire in the mid-fourteenth century. Duke Rudolf IV of Austria (d. 1365) was not among the four lay electors defined by the Golden Bull in 1356/57. He thus did not belong to this small group who constituted the new princely elite in the Empire. From his point of view this was unacceptable – after all his uncle Frederick, his grandfather Albrecht I and his great-grandfather Rudolph I had all been Roman kings – and thus he took a whole series of actions to compensate for this.¹⁹ Having a very large seal was just one of his measures. With a diameter of 120 mm his equestrian seal was 20 mm larger than that of Emperor Charles IV, 30 mm larger than that of the count palatine and also 10 mm larger than that of the duke of Saxony, both of whom were

electors.²⁰ Subsequently Rudolf had to destroy his seal by command of Charles IV. This was not due to its size, but to its design and the all-too-grand titles it attributed to Rudolf.²¹ In fact, his new seal was even larger than the old one measuring 127 mm.²² This almost childish act of defiance by Rudolf shows once more that the size of the seals was not officially regulated.

If we turn to the seal circumscriptions we see that English earls and, later in the fourteenth century, also English dukes were clearly distinguished from all the others by their comital and ducal title respectively. They alone used the title of *comes* or *dux* on their seals. Here, the personal title also alluded to the group of earls or dukes. In the Empire, the title of *dux* or *marchio* did not automatically imply that its bearer was an Imperial prince. The dukes of Teck, for instance, or, in the fourteenth century the already mentioned margraves of Baden, did not count among the Imperial princes.²³ Nor did the seal's legend explicitly refer to the rank of an Imperial prince. I know of no case in which *princeps imperii* was used in a legend. Similarly, there was not one specific term used to refer to the dignity of an electoral prince. When in the course of the fourteenth century some of the princes began to signify their electoral dignity on their seals they did so in different ways. The dukes of Saxony used the title of *sacri imperii archimarschalcus* in reference to the fact that the electoral right was attached to the arch-office, while, after his accession to the principality in 1390, Count palatine Rupert II added the title *sacri imperii elector* to the *intitulatio* on his large seal.²⁴ Yet the legends were not completely devoid of a reference to the Imperial princes as a group. Wilfried Schöntag has shown that in the thirteenth century the circumscription of princely seals continued to name the bearer in the nominative and to use the *dei gratia* clause, i.e. *Lodwicus dei gratia comes palatinus Reni dux Bawarie*.²⁵ The seals of non-princely magnates, by contrast, took on the form already widespread in Western Europe: *Sigillum* followed by the bearer's title and name in the genitive. The *dei gratia* clause was not used.²⁶ But again this was not a hard and fast rule. The dukes of Brabant, for example, who were very much part of the western European cultural and political sphere, employed the genitive form of their names and title. At the close of the thirteenth century Duke John II (d. 1312)

added the *dei gratia* clause (*Sigillum Iohannis dei gratia ducis* ...) thus amalgamating the two usages.²⁷ One further qualification should be made. As Schöntag himself pointed out, the nominative form was only used by the secular Imperial princes. The ecclesiastical princes took on the genitive form in the course of the thirteenth century and thus followed the general usage of the Church.²⁸

By far the largest space on a seal was occupied by its motif. It conveyed the seal's central message. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the mounted knight emerged as the most popular motif on aristocratic seals. Initially common in England and France, it spread to the Empire in the second half of the twelfth century and established itself on ducal and comital seals. Although clearly indicative of high social status the equestrian motif was not, however, compulsory for Imperial princes. The margraves of Brandenburg continued to display their traditional motif of a standing knight until the fourteenth century.²⁹ Nor was the equestrian motif limited to the group of Imperial princes. Counts and, in the course of the thirteenth century, untitled lords (*domini*; *Herren*) used this motif as well.³⁰ The mounted knight therefore indicated the affiliation to the *ordo* of the knights; but it said little about its bearer's place within the aristocracy.

Yet, the design of an equestrian seal had more to offer than just a mounted knight. The knight could carry a lance with a banner at its top or brandish a sword. In the Empire the older motif of the lance with a banner became associated with the Imperial princes when they started to emerge as the elite aristocratic group towards the end of the twelfth century. The flag symbolised their Imperial fief, the principality.³¹ Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony and Bavaria, used various large seals showing a mounted knight carrying a lance with a banner. After his deposition in 1180 he stopped using these seals. They represented a rank Henry no longer enjoyed. Their further deployment would have been inappropriate.³² In the same decade, Baldwin, count of Hainault, was made margrave of Namur and an Imperial prince.³³ Shortly thereafter, in October 1191, he received *de jure uxoris* the county of Flanders which he held until the death of his wife Margaret of Alsace in November 1194, when the county devolved to their son Baldwin VI. The well-informed chronicler Gislebert de

Mons described how these changes affected Baldwin's seals. As count of Hainault he had used a seal with a diameter of 65 mm depicting a mounted knight brandishing a sword.³⁴ According to Gislebert, Baldwin immediately ceased using this seal once he had been promoted to an Imperial prince. His new seal was of 90 mm diameter and showed a mounted knight carrying a lance with a banner.³⁵ He then went on to modify this seal when he received the county of Flanders, but after the loss of the county he redeployed the seal he had used as margrave of Namur and count of Hainault.³⁶

Although as a rule Imperial princes displayed a lance with a banner on their seals and non-princes a brandished sword, there were prominent exceptions. Notable were the seals of the counts palatine Ludwig I and his son Otto II in the early thirteenth century. Ludwig, duke of Bavaria, and his underage son were almost certainly jointly invested with the Palatinate in 1214.³⁷ A double-sided seal of Ludwig, known to have been in use between 1214 and 1219, depicted on one side a mounted knight carrying a lance with a banner and on the other side a mounted knight brandishing a sword. The legend is heavily damaged and thus it is impossible to know whether both sides bore the same legend or different ones; the palatine title, however, is clearly readable on the side showing the sword. During the years of 1225/6 at least Ludwig used a large equestrian seal naming him as count palatine. The motif was the brandished sword not the lance.³⁸ The same applies to the equestrian seal his son Otto II used after taking over responsibility in the Palatinate in 1228. It showed a brandished sword. It is tempting to relate this choice to the particular judicial authority of the count palatine. According to the *Sachsenspiegel*, a lawbook composed between 1220 and 1235, the count palatine was to act as judge when the king was put on trial.³⁹ Did the sword refer to this special palatine dignity? At present this can be no more than mere speculation.⁴⁰ In general, on equestrian seals this motif was associated with non-princely aristocrats or sons of Imperial princes who had not yet been invested with the principality. It is thus not that surprising to see that Otto did not stick to this design. In 1231, when he succeeded to the duchy of Bavaria, he had a new equestrian seal made. This referred to him as duke only

and displayed a lance with a banner.⁴¹ In the late 1240s he again modified his seal by adding the palatine title to the legend without otherwise changing its design.⁴² The lance with the banner was apparently the more appropriate symbol for one of the most powerful princes in the realm.

In the course of the fourteenth century, however, the importance of this motif as a sign of princely rank decreased slightly. Wenzel, duke of Luxemburg (from 1354) and, from 1355, also of Brabant, displayed a mounted knight brandishing a sword on his equestrian seal.⁴³ Wilhelm of Berg likewise continued to use a seal depicting a mounted knight brandishing a sword after his elevation to the rank of a duke and Imperial prince in 1380.⁴⁴ Even among the electors this became an acceptable fashion. Sigismund, margrave of Brandenburg, used this motif and Count palatine Rupert II did so too.⁴⁵ This suggests that by the second half of the fourteenth century the princely rank had become so firmly established and the social difference between the princes and the other aristocrats so clearly discernible that even newly created princes could afford not to display the lance with the banner on their large equestrian seals.

In the long run this development helped to pave the way for the establishment of the great armorial seal which, however, played no role in the Empire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The bearer's coat(s) of arms were displayed on the shield of the mounted knight, on the caparison, sometimes on the banner and the background of the seal.⁴⁶ It was on the smaller, less authoritative secret seals that the coat of arms dominated the design. Looking at the coat of arms placed upon the large equestrian seals there is one development in the fourteenth century that deserves special mention in the context of this paper: namely, some of the electors introduced particular shields to signify their special rank. The dukes of Saxony inserted a shield of crossed swords referring to their Imperial office of an archmarshal and hence the electoral dignity, while Rupert II added a blank red shield to the great seal of the counts palatine. Both corresponded to the newly inserted titles (*archimarschalcus*, *elector*) in the legend of their seals.⁴⁷ Again, these were individual signs referring to the bearer's principality to which the electoral right was attached. A uniform symbol used by all electors to denote their rank on their shields did not

exist. It was left to the electors to create their own signs.

In England, the seal bearing a mounted knight was introduced by William the Conqueror. On William's seal the knight carried a lance, but soon the lance was replaced by the apparently more chivalric symbol of the brandished sword. This design of the equestrian seal rapidly spread throughout the ranks. Earls, barons and knights made use of it,⁴⁸ but just as in the Empire it was not obligatory for earls, barons or knights to use this design. Hugh de Neville (d. 1234), for example, used a seal displaying a man slaying a lion, another chivalric motif.⁴⁹ In contrast to the Imperial princes, the earls did not develop a specifically comital corporate design. In thirteenth-century England, therefore, the equestrian seal declared the membership of its bearer to the knightly *ordo*, but it said little about his place within the aristocracy. This, however, also meant that an earl did not necessarily require the image of a mounted knight brandishing a sword to communicate his comital status. This relative freedom in choosing a seal motif helps to explain why in England, in contrast to the Empire, the great armorial seal became a true alternative to the equestrian seal as early as the thirteenth century. The armorial seal referred very prominently to its bearer's identity, his family, and, once coats of arms had become firmly attached to lordships, also to his (claimed) titles.⁵⁰ Yet, T. A. Heslop has shown that the rise of the great armorial seal was neither straightforward nor fast.⁵¹ A number of thirteenth-century earls opted for a compromise, the double-sided seal.⁵² In England, as in the Empire, a double-sided seal could be used to display two different dignities held by its bearer. Roger de Quincy (d. 1264), earl of Winchester and constable of Scotland, deployed the obverse to show his comital dignity and the reverse to signal his Scottish dignity.⁵³ While the obverse showed a classic equestrian motif, the reverse displayed a knight on foot fighting a lion and bearing on his shield the Quincy coat of arms.⁵⁴ In most cases, however, the earls and barons used double-sided seals to show the equestrian motif on one side and their coat of arms on the other (the coat of arms was, of course, also depicted on the equestrian side, e.g. on the shield). This design thus combined two messages: affiliation to the knightly order and, more specifically, to a particular aristocratic family and its lordship(s).

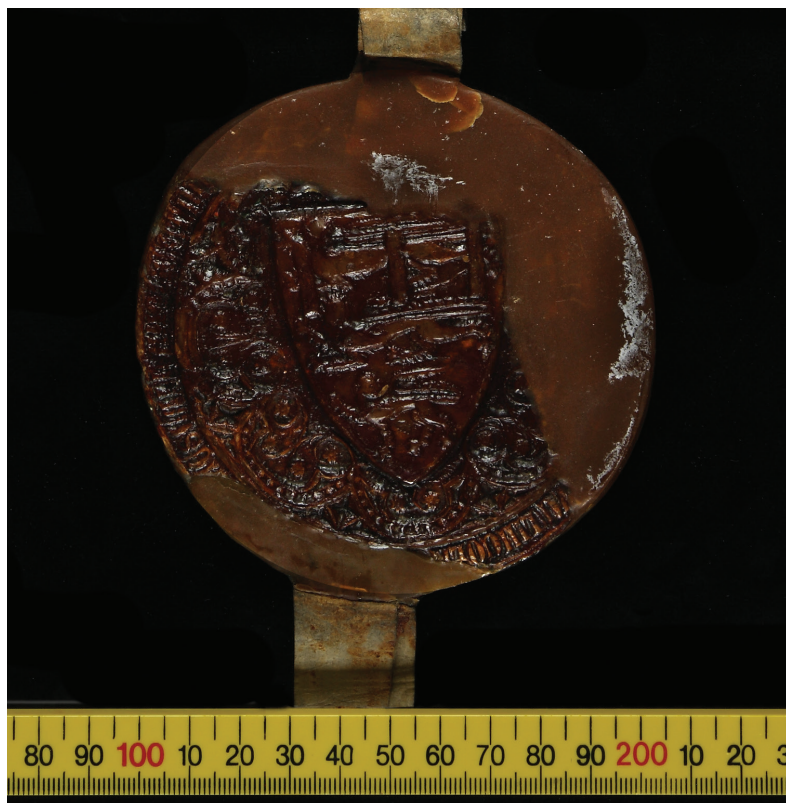
A double-sided seal, perhaps the most famous belonging to an English earl in the fourteenth century, is of particular interest in this context. In 1346, John de Warenne, earl of Surrey, confirmed his grant to King Edward III with a seal showing on the obverse a person sitting on a throne and on the reverse an equestrian seal (Fig. 4.1).⁵⁵ The use of a throne on a seal of an English magnate was absolutely exceptional⁵⁶ and only the absence of royal insignia and the depiction of a warren in the background made clear that the person sitting on the throne was not a king. The legend on the obverse names John as earl of Warenne and Strathearn and count palatine. William St John Hope, who was the first to describe and discuss this seal, pointed to the Scottish lordship of Strathearn as the cause of this unusual design. It is worthwhile to pursue this suggestion a little further. In 1334, the Scottish parliament headed by Edward Balliol awarded the earldom of Strathearn to John de Warenne, 'Edward III's beloved and faithful kinsman' and nephew of Balliol's wife Isabella de Warenne.⁵⁷ John had supported Edward III's and thus Edward Balliol's campaign for the Scottish throne. Strathearn was among his rewards. Until this date the earls of Strathearn neither carried the title of count palatine nor had a man sitting on a throne been depicted on their great seals.⁵⁸ These were new features that came with John's appointment and must have been approved by Edward Balliol, if not by Edward III himself. The image therefore certainly did not imply the usurpation of a royal sign and royal rights by John de Warenne, but, on the contrary, their voluntary devolvement from the Crown to John. He represented royal power in Strathearn (whether English or Scottish is probably a moot point) and the imitation of the royal seal symbolised the quasi-regal authority of a count palatine. Interpreted in this way this image did not differ too much from those used on the seals of royal officials (a castle, or the king's head) that identified their bearers as representatives of royal authority.⁵⁹

In practice John's new seal made little, if any impression in Scotland. His rule as count palatine remained by and large theoretical. This may not have mattered greatly to John. His English earldom was more important to him as can be seen by the fact that Strathearn came last in his *intitulatio*. What appears to have made this dignity so attractive to John was the possibility

Fig. 4.1. TNA, E 42/244, double-sided seal (1346) of John de Warenne, earl of Surrey, (d. 1347), obverse.



Fig. 4.2. TNA, DL 27/155, Armorial seal (1349) of Henry de Grosmont as earl of Lancaster; (d. 1361).



of deploying a unique image on his seal, an image linking him closely to the king and setting him apart from the other magnates. We do not know when John had his seal cut. It is likely that he did so shortly after being invested with his palatine dignity, but a later date cannot be ruled out. The impression appended to his

charter issued on 1 April 1346 is the only one that is known. In any case, John's seal remained exceptional among lay magnates.⁶⁰ Henry, duke of Lancaster, for instance, did not portray his palatine rights in any special way on his great seal. He stuck to the principle of a classic double-sided seal: a mounted knight on one side and the coat of arms on the other (Fig. 4.2). As duke he may not have felt such a great urgency to stress his palatine authority, or perhaps he preferred the Lancastrian coat of arms (three leopards and a label of three points) which indicated closeness to the royal family, but all this is mere speculation.⁶¹

The coat of arms, instead, became more and more popular and slowly but steadily pushed the equestrian motif off great seals. By the fifteenth century the standard aristocratic seal was one sided and showed its bearer's coat of arms.⁶² The large armorial seal contained no visual element referring to a particular layer of rank except, of course, for the rather large group of those having the right to bear arms. However, nothing evoked affiliation to a specific aristocratic rank such as earl or baron. Instead, as stated above, it fully focused on its bearer, his family and his (claimed) lordship(s). This was also the main concern of the small armorial seals. Yet here, during the reign of Edward III, we see the introduction of an element that was used as a symbol of a specific rank: the cap of estate. Edward himself seems to have been responsible for its first use on a seal. On the reverse of his fifth (1340–1347) and sixth seals (1340–1360) a mounted knight was depicted wearing a helmet surrounded by a cap decorated with the royal crest. William St John Hope has suggested that this cap referred to his dignity as duke of Normandy and Aquitaine.⁶³ This may have been the case, but the evidence is not entirely conclusive and so some caution is advisable. The legend of his second seal (1327–1336) provided, *inter alia*, the title of the duke of Aquitaine, but displayed no cap. The legend found on both the fifth and sixth seals named Edward as king of France, king of England and lord of Ireland, but did not refer to any ducal dignity. One can argue that this was precisely the reason for the introduction of the cap: it communicated the ducal dignities not mentioned in the legend due, perhaps, to the lack of space resulting from the introduction of the title of king of France. When after the treaty of Brétigny in

1360, Edward had yet again cut another seal (used until his death in 1377) the title of French king was dropped. The space that had thus become available was filled once again with the title of duke of Aquitaine. The cap, however, remained part of the design on the reverse of the seal. On his eighth seal, finally, extant from 1372, the title of duke of Aquitaine was again dropped in favour of the title of king of France.⁶⁴ Whatever the reasons for the adoption of the motif of a cap had been, it was quickly adopted by the king's sons. The king's first born son and first English duke ever, Edward, displayed a cap on his seals, first on a number of his smaller armorial seals, then also from 1362 on his great seal portraying him as prince of Aquitaine and prince of Wales.⁶⁵ The cap may well have referred to the duchy of Cornwall which he had held since 1337. No doubt exists about the causal relationship between the ducal dignity and the cap on the seal in the case of Henry of Lancaster. When in 1351 Henry was created duke he changed his small armorial seal. The new one displayed a cap of estate above his shield (Fig. 4.3).⁶⁶ The royal sons followed suit in the ensuing decades: Lionel as duke of Clarence and John of Gaunt as duke of Lancaster in 1362,⁶⁷ their brothers Edmund as duke of York and Thomas as duke of Gloucester in 1385.⁶⁸ In 1362, the cap also became part of the investiture ritual of a duke. The dukes had previously been invested like earls, i.e. by being girded with the sword, but now Edward III set them visually apart from the earls. He invested his son by placing a cap of fur and a golden coronet on his head. They were the signs of his new ducal dignity.⁶⁹ In contrast to the earls, the dukes therefore had a common symbol on their small seals that referred to their specific rank. Yet, the cap did not retain its ducal exclusivity on seals. Soon it was also adopted by far lesser men. In 1415, Gilbert Talbot, lord of Archenfield and Blackmere in Hampshire, used an armorial seal which displayed above the shield what looks like a cap of estate.⁷⁰ This shows once more the lack of official regulation concerning the design of seals. Aristocrats were relatively free in their choices.⁷¹

So all in all, the design of armorial seals contained references to a specific peer group only to a very limited extent. It could, however, communicate rank within the bearer's family. The sons of an earl were not equal in



Fig. 4.3 TNA, DL 27/159, Armorial seal (1356) of Henry as duke of Lancaster, (d. 1361).

rank. The principal mode of succession in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century England was primogeniture. The eldest living son normally inherited his father's title and the bulk of his estates, while younger sons had to be content with some provisions.⁷² The coats of arms reflected these different positions.⁷³ They became differenced, that is certain symbols (e.g. a label or a crescent) were added to the family's coat of arms.⁷⁴ Thomas, earl of Lancaster, and his younger brother Henry of Monmouth both sealed the barons' letter to the pope in 1301. Thomas displayed on the obverse of his double-sided seal the Lancastrian coat of arms, three leopards with a label of three points. Henry appended an armorial seal showing three leopards and a bendlet (see cover image). When Henry became earl of Lancaster in 1326 he took on the Lancastrian coat of arms, while his son and namesake Henry de Grosmont, later duke of Lancaster, used the motif of three leopards and a bendlet.⁷⁵ Another telling example for the practice of cadency in the early fourteenth century comes from the Bohun family. Humphrey VII (c. 1276–1321/2), earl of Hereford and Essex, bore the traditional coat of arms of the Bohun family, a bend cotised between six lions rampant. The seal collections of the British Library and the National Archives reveal nothing about seals of his numerous sons during his lifetime.⁷⁶ They are more informative, however, for the period after Humphrey's death in 1321/2. His eldest surviving son and successor to the earldom John de Bohun took on the traditional Bohun coat of arms.⁷⁷ John's younger twin brothers

William and Edward each used a different variation of this motif. Edward's seal showed a bend cotised between six lions rampant, on the bend a lozenge charged with three leopards.⁷⁸ William's seal in turn displayed a bend cotised between six lions rampant, on the bend three stars.⁷⁹

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a fixed system of signs that would allow a straightforward identification as first, second, third etc. born son did not yet exist. A differenced seal therefore indicated principally that its bearer was not the earl himself, but a person closely related to him (a son, a brother, an uncle). Yet familial origin was not necessarily the only point of reference for a differenced seal. When its bearer established his own lordship his coat of arms became this lordship's signifier and starting point for any further differencing. The second seal of Edmund, younger son of Henry III and earl of Lancaster, showed the royal coat of arms (three leopards) with a label of three points each charged with fleur de lys. The three leopards with a label of three points became the standard coat of arms for the earldom of Lancaster.⁸⁰

In the Empire, by contrast, primogeniture was not the main form of succession among princely families in the thirteenth and for much of the fourteenth centuries. It was common practice to invest all sons with the principality. They then either exercised the lordship together or defined areas within their principality which they ruled individually. As a consequence, there was no need for sons of an Imperial prince to have different coats of arms. Quite the contrary, there were good reasons for them to look alike and thereby to communicate equal authority. An interesting example is provided by the dukes of Lower Bavaria at the close of the thirteenth century. After the death of Duke Henry XIII in 1290, his eldest son Otto took over the government of the duchy.⁸¹ His two younger brothers Ludwig and Stephan joined him in this capacity only four years later. Yet the household ordinance of 1294 shows that among the brothers Otto still commanded seniority as can be seen by the fact that his household was slightly greater than those of his brothers.⁸² The equestrian seals of the three brothers reflected this situation very precisely: Except for the personal names the seals were identically designed. Otto's seal,

however, was slightly larger than those of his brothers. His seal measured 90 mm in diameter, theirs about 70 mm.⁸³ Here, ranking within the family was expressed by the different size of the seals, while the shared design maintained the idea of equal princely rank and ducal authority. The sensitivity towards their respective ranking is underscored by the pains with which the equal rank of Ludwig and Stephan was communicated by the charter's *intitulatio* and the order in which their seals were appended. While Ludwig was named before Stephan in the *intitulatio*, Stephan's seal came before Ludwig's. The subsequent history of the duchy shows how much the size of the seals continued to matter for the dukes. In 1305 Otto moved to Hungary to claim the Hungarian crown. As Ludwig had died in 1296, the government of the duchy fell to Stephan alone. He immediately had a new seal cut, which now measured 100 mm in diameter. However, when Otto – having failed to secure the Hungarian throne – returned to the duchy in 1308, Stephan almost entirely ceased using his new seal. Otto, too, made only very limited use of his royal seal.⁸⁴ The smaller armorial seals were now mainly deployed. The times of grandeur were apparently over for that ducal generation.

But the mode of fraternal co-succession increasingly came under pressure in the course of the fourteenth century. This was particularly true for the electors. The Golden Bull of 1356/57 ruled that primogeniture had to be observed as the mode of succession in the electoral principalities.⁸⁵ There should be only one elector per principality. This aimed at keeping the numbers of voters at seven by eliminating the problem of brothers all claiming the right to vote. If then, as we have seen, an elector like Count palatine Rupert II introduced a sign specifically dedicated to the electoral dignity and reserved for the seal of the elector, the situation became analogous to that found in England. The design of the seal distinguished between brothers.

This comparative survey of seals of the higher echelons of the English and the German aristocracies in the thirteenth and fourteenth century has shown that in both realms the design of seals was not regulated by official legislation but by social practice. The peer group or, more precisely, the group one aspired to be part of, determined what one's seal looked like. Regional competition (such as that between

Juliers and Guelders) played an important role, as did the political and cultural sphere in which the bearer of the seal primarily moved. The dukes of Brabant, even though Imperial princes, looked in their activities very much to the west and northwest of Europe, while the Imperial bishops took account of the customs of the church. The sheer size of the Empire accounts for the slightly greater diversity in seal designs found there in comparison to that found for England in the same period.

Seals were an important tool to express social ambitions and an obvious means to achieve this was through the size of a seal. The larger the better: a tendency which continued far into modern times. It is interesting to note that in England size functioned as a marker of social distinction primarily between comital and baronial seals on the one hand and knightly seals on the other. From this point of view the earls do not appear as a group above the (greater) barons. In the Empire, size distinguished the seals of the Imperial princes from other aristocrats, even though it must be noted that in absolute terms the sizes could vary across the Empire. There was no sharp rule fixing the size of a comital seal in respect to a princely seal. Looking at the design of the seals it is remarkable how the two aristocracies made different use of the same basic design: the mounted knight. Both earls and Imperial princes used the motif of the mounted knight to express their affiliation to the knightly *ordo*. In so doing they did not, however, distinguish themselves from other aristocrats. The mounted knight was not employed as a symbol of a specific noble rank on either side of the Channel in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In fact, in England, only the title *comes* in the legend distinguished a comital seal from other seals. The significance of this characteristic in communicating comital rank should not be underestimated, yet compared to how seals were exploited to convey princely rank in the Empire, this seems relatively modest. In the Empire, too, the seal's legend was helpful in distinguishing an Imperial prince from other magnates, but the design of the seal took centre stage in conveying this message. The lance and the banner acted as the symbol through which the affiliation to the group of Imperial princes was communicated. Its significance decreased, however, in the course

of the fourteenth century, probably because the superior rank of the Imperial princes over non-princely counts had become firmly established. The mounted knight brandishing a sword, the common motif of western European equestrian seals, which in the Empire had so far been by and large confined to non-princely seals, now made its appearance on princely seals as well. Roughly contemporarily some of the electors created specific signs to indicate their special rank, but unlike the lance with the banner, no sign common to all electors emerged.

Interestingly, but certainly no more than coincidentally, is the fact that the English aristocracy started to experiment with a symbol referring to a group of nobles at around the time when the importance of the lance waned amongst the Imperial princes. The cap of estate was introduced shortly before the mid-fourteenth century to distinguish ducal seals from others. This symbol soon lost its exclusivity, but its introduction by Edward III underlines the extent of the king's interest in setting this new group, mainly his sons, apart from the earls and the barons. He not only brought the title of duke to the English aristocracy, he shortly thereafter established a symbol attached to that superior dignity.

In general, however, the English seals did not refer to a specific rank within the aristocracy, but to the bearer, his family and his lordship. The coat of arms became increasingly the central feature of the aristocratic seal, finally replacing the equestrian motif altogether. The armorial seal told its addressee nothing about the exact place of its bearer in the noble hierarchy, a feature that English seals share with the German ones (there is no way to tell from the seals that the Golden Bull ranked the Count palatine higher than the duke of Saxony, for example). But the armorial seal could express much about hierarchy within a particular family. As a result of primogeniture, the system of cadency began to take shape and to distinguish the earl from his sons, brothers, uncles, cousins and nephews. In the Empire, the common practice of fraternal co-rulership did not necessitate similar creativity in this area. Within the upper aristocratic families in the Empire social differences were less nuanced than in England. The seals reflected this situation very precisely.

Notes

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- 2 *Die Summa de arte prosandi des Konrad von Mure*, ed. W. Kronbichler (Geist und Werk der Zeiten 17) (Zürich, 1968), p. 166.
- 3 This study is part of a larger project comparing English earls and Imperial princes in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It takes further the points outlined in the second part of J. Peltzer, 'Bildgewordene Autorität: Annäherungen an einen Vergleich der Siegel der Reichsfürsten und der Earls im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert', in *Autorität und Akzeptanz. Das Reich im Europa des 13. Jahrhunderts*, (Ostfildern, 2013), eds H. Seibert, W. Bomm and V. Türck, pp. 267–83, at pp. 276–83. Inevitably there is some overlap between these two papers.
- 4 M. Pastoureau, *Les sceaux* (Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 36) (Turnhout, 1981); M. Pastoureau, 'Les sceaux et la fonction sociale des images', in *L'image. Fonctions et usages des images dans l'occident médiéval. Actes du 6^e International Workshop on Medieval Societies, Centre Ettore Majorana (Erice, Sicile, 17–23 octobre 1992)* (Cahiers du Léopard d'Or 5) (Paris, 1996), eds J. Baschet and J.-C. Schmitt, pp. 275–308; B. Bedos-Rezak, *Form and Order in Medieval France. Studies in Social and Quantitative Sigillographie* (Variorum Collected Studies 424) (Aldershot, 1993); B. Bedos-Rezak, 'Medieval identity: a sign and a concept', *American Historical Review* 105 (2000), 1489–1533; B. Bedos-Rezak, 'Du sujet à l'objet. La formulation identitaire et ses enjeux culturels', in *Unverwechselbarkeit. Persönliche Identität und Identifikation in der vormodernen Gesellschaft* (Norm und Struktur. Studien zum sozialen Wandel in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit 23) (Cologne, 2004), ed. P. von Moos, pp. 63–83; B. Bedos-Rezak, 'L'au delà du soi. Métamorphoses sigillaires en Europe médiévale', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 49 (2006), 337–58; P. D. A. Harvey, 'Personal seals in thirteenth-century England', in *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages. Essays presented to John Taylor* (London, 1991), eds I. Wood and G. A. Loud, pp. 117–29; P. D. A. Harvey and A. McGuiness, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (London, 1996); T. A. Heslop, 'English Seals in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', in *Age of Chivalry. Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400* (London, 1987), eds J. Alexander and P. Binski, pp. 114–17; T. A. Heslop, 'The Seals of the Twelfth-Century Earls of Chester', in *The Earldom of Chester and its Charters. A Tribute to Geoffrey Barraclough = Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society* 71 (1991), 179–97; D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000–1300* (London, 1992), pp. 242–7; N. Adams, J. Cherry and J. Robinson (eds), *Good Impressions. Image and Authority in Medieval Seals* (London, 2008), in particular A. Ailes, 'The Knight's Alter Ego: From Equestrian to Armorial Seal' in *ibid.*, pp. 8–11; J. Cherry and A. Payne (eds), *Signs and Symbols. Proceedings of the 2006 Harlaxton Symposium* (Harlaxton Medieval Studies 18) (Donington, 2009); T. Diederich, 'Prolegomena zu einer neuen Siegeltypologie', *Archiv für Diplomatik* 29 (1983), 242–84; T. Diederich, *Siegelkunde. Beiträge zu ihrer Vertiefung und Weiterführung*, (Cologne, 2012); L. Fenske, 'Adel und Rittertum im Spiegel früher heraldischer Formen und deren Entwicklung', in *Das ritterliche Turnier im Mittelalter. Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Formen- und Verhaltensgeschichte des Rittertums* (Veröffentlichungen des Max Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 80) (Göttingen, 1985), ed. J. Fleckenstein, pp. 75–166; A. Stieldorf, *Rheinische Frauensiegel. Zur rechtlichen und sozialen Stellung weltlicher Frauen im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Rheinisches Archiv 142) (Cologne, 1999); E. Gönner, 'Reitersiegel in Südwestdeutschland', in *Aus südwestdeutscher Geschichte. Festschrift für Hans-Martin Maurer. Dem Archivar und Historiker zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart, 1994), eds W. Schmierer, G. Cordes, R. Kieß and G. Taddey, pp. 151–78; W. Schöntag, 'Das Reitersiegel als Rechtssymbol und Darstellung ritterlichen Selbstverständnisses. Fahnenlanze, Banner und Schwert auf Reitersiegeln des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts vor allem südwestdeutscher Adelsfamilien', in *Bild und Geschichte. Studien zur politischen Ikonographie. Festschrift für Hansmartin Schwarzmaier zum fünfundsiebzigsten Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen, 1997), eds K. Krimm and H. John, pp. 79–124; W. Schöntag, 'Amts, Standesbezeichnungen und Titel in den Siegellegenden im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins* 147 (1999), 145–69; M. Späth (ed.), *Die Bildlichkeit korporativer Siegel im Mittelalter. Kunstgeschichte und Geschichte im Gespräch* (Sensus. Studien zur mittelalterlichen Kunst 1) (Cologne, 2009).
- 5 T. E. Scott-Ellis (Baron Howard de Walden), *Some Feudal Lords and their Seals MCCCCI*, n. pl. 1904, pp. 43–6, 52–3.
- 6 C. H. Hunter Blair, 'Armorial upon English Seals from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Centuries', *Archaeologia* 89 (1943), 1–26, pls ii and iii.
- 7 S. Hofmann, *Urkundenwesen, Kanzlei und Regierungssystem der Herzöge von Bayern und Pfalzgrafen bei Rhein von 1180 bzw. 1214 bis 1255 bzw. 1294* (Münchner Historische Studien.

- Abteilung Geschichtliche Hilfswissenschaften 3) (Kallmünz, 1967), pp. 50–2 (Ludwig I), 78–9 (Otto II), 137–8 (Ludwig II); L. Schnurrer, *Urkundenwesen, Kanzlei und Regierungssystem der Herzöge von Niederbayern 1255–1340* (Münchener Historische Studien Abteilung Geschichtliche Hilfswissenschaften 8) (Kallmünz, 1972), pp. 35–6 (Heinrich XIII); A. Sprinkart, *Kanzlei, Rat und Urkundenwesen der Pfalzgrafen bei Rhein und Herzöge von Bayern 1294 bis 1314* (1317). *Forschungen zum Regierungssystem Rudolfs I. und Ludwigs IV.* (Forschungen zur Kaiser und Papstgeschichte des Mittelalters. Beihefte zu J. F. Böhmer, *Regesta Imperii*, 4) (Cologne, 1986), pp. 292–6 (Rudolf II, Ludwig IV); J. Spiegel, *Urkundenwesen, Kanzlei, Rat und Regierungssystem des Pfalzgrafen bei Rhein und Herzogs von Bayern Ruprecht I. (1309–1390)* (Stiftung zur Förderung der pfälzischen Geschichtsforschung Reihe B: Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Pfalz 1), 2 vols, (Neustadt/Weinstraße, 1996), i, pp. 26, 29, 32, 37 (Adolf, Rudolf II, Ruprecht I, Ruprecht II); J. Peltzer, *Der Rang der Pfalzgrafen bei Rhein. Die Gestaltung der politisch-sozialen Ordnung des Reichs im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (RANK. Politisch-soziale Ordnungen im mittelalterlichen Europa 2) (Ostfildern, 2013), pp. 260–1 (Ruprecht II's second equestrian seal).
- 8 The development of the rank of the margraves of Baden in the late middle ages is analysed by H. Krieg, 'Die Markgrafen von Baden: Eine Familie am unteren Rand des Fürstenstandes', in *Princely Rank in Late Medieval Europe. Trodden Paths and Promising Avenues* (RANK. Politisch-soziale Ordnungen im mittelalterlichen Europa 1) (Ostfildern, 2011), eds T. Huthwelker, J. Peltzer and M. Wemhöner, pp. 309–32.
- 9 F. von Weech (ed.), *Siegel von Urkunden aus dem grossherzoglich badischen General-Landesarchiv zu Karlsruhe* (Frankfurt/Main, 1883), pls 3–5. The exception is a seal of Rudolf III (d. 1332) measuring c. 77 mm, *ibid.*, pl. 5 no. 1. The counts of Montfort, whose lands were situated mainly at the eastern border of the Lake Constance, provide another example. In the thirteenth century, their seals measured between 60 mm and 65 mm, W. P. Liesching, 'Die Siegel der Grafen von Montfort', *Adler* 13 (xxxvii) (1983–1985), pp. 209–35, at p. 220.
- 10 *Urkundenbuch für die Geschichte des Niederrheins oder des Erzstifts Köln, der Fürstentümer Jülich und Berg, Geldern, Meurs Cleve und Mark, und der Reichsstifte Elten, Essen und Werden*, ed. T. J. Lacomblet, 4 vols, (Düsseldorf, 1840–1858, repr. Aalen 1960), iii, no. 307.
- 11 W. A. van Spaen, *Oordeelkundige inleiding tot de historie van Gelderland* (4 vols., Utrecht, 1801–1805), ii, *Codex diplomaticus*, no. 42.
- 12 W. Ewald, *Rheinische Siegel VI. Siegel der Grafen und Herzöge von Jülich, Berg, Cleve, Herrn von Heinsberg* (Publikationen der Gesellschaft für rheinische Geschichtskunde 27) (Bonn, 1941), pl. 3 no. 9, pl. 4 nos 2, 6 (Juliers); A. P. van Schilfgaarde, *Zegels en genealogische gegevens van de graven en hertogen van Gelre, graven van Zutphen* (Gelre 33) (Arnhem, 1967), p. 35 no. 58, p. 39 no. 65 (Guelders); Diederich, *Siegelkunde*, pp. 105–06.
- 13 *Urkundenbuch für die Geschichte des Niederrheins*, ed. Lacomblet, iii, no. 848.
- 14 Ewald, *Rheinische Siegel VI*, pl. 11 nos 5, 6.
- 15 On the sumptuary law see C. Given-Wilson, 'Rank and Status among the English Nobility, c. 1300–1500', in *Princely Rank*, eds Huthwelker *et al.*, pp. 97–117, at pp. 113–14.
- 16 *Diplomatic Documents preserved in the Public Record Office. Volume I 1101–1272*, ed. P. Chaplais (London, 1964), no. 367; H. Jenkinson, *A Guide to Seals in the Public Record Office* (Public Record Office Handbooks 1) (London, 1968), p. 11, note 5.
- 17 C. H. Hunter Blair, 'A note upon mediaeval seals with special reference to those in Durham Treasury', *Archaeologia Aeliana* 3rd ser. 17 (1920), 244–313, at p. 260, reports this story without, however, revealing its source. Harvey, *British Seals*, p. 51. For Edward II's royal and Thomas' equestrian seal, see W. de Gray Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of the Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 6 vols, London 1887–1900, i, p. 21 no. 47 (Edward II); ii, p. 339 no. 6331 (Thomas). T. A. Heslop has pointed to a case from the ecclesiastical sphere where the destruction of a newly made monastic seal was probably due to its disproportionately large size, Heslop, 'English seals in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', p. 116.
- 18 On Thomas' claims to high office, notably the Stewardship of England, that cannot but have helped to fuel his sense of importance, see J. R. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster, 1307–1322* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 76–7, 233, 241–3, 289–91, 321–2; J. Peltzer, 'La dignité de l'office de cour au bas Moyen Âge', in *Hiérarchie des pouvoirs, délégation de pouvoir et responsabilité des administrateurs dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Âge. Actes du colloque de Metz, 16–18 juin 2011* (Centre de Recherche Universitaire Lorrain d'Histoire. Université de Lorraine – Site Metz 46), Metz 2012, eds A. Bérenger and F. Lachaud, pp. 271–89, at pp. 287–8.
- 19 For the context and the measures taken by Rudolf, see A. Sauter, *Fürstliche Herrschaftsrepräsentation. Die Habsburger im 14. Jahrhundert* (Mittelalter-Forschungen 12) (Ostfildern, 2003), pp. 157–186; E. Schlotheuber, 'Das Privilegium maius – eine habsburgische Fälschung im Ringen um Rang und Einfluss', in P. Schmid and

- H. Wanderwitz (eds), *Die Geburt Österreichs. 850 Jahre Privilegium minus* (Regensburger Kulturleben 4) (Regensburg, 2007), pp. 143–165; Peltzer, *Rang*, pp. 399–419.
- 20 K. von Sava, 'Die Siegel der österreichischen Regenten, 7. Abt.', *Mitteilungen der K.K. Central-Commission zur Erforschung und Erhaltung der Baudenkmale* 9 (1864), 147–218 [pt 1], 242–68 [pt 2]; 11 (1866), 137–52 [pt 3a]; 12 (1867), 171–88 [pt 3b]; 13 (1868), 184–92 [pt 4]; 14 (1869), 193–200 [pt 5]; 15 (1870), 35–8 [pt 6]; 16 (1871), 17–32 [pt 7]; here 12 [3b], 171–4 and pl. vii. O. Posse, *Die Siegel der deutschen Kaiser und Könige von 715–1913*, 5 vols, (Dresden, 1909–1913), ii, pl. 3 no. 4 (Imperial seal of Charles IV); Spiegel, *Urkundenwesen*, i, p. 32; O. Posse, *Die Siegel der Wettiner und der Landgrafen von Thüringen, der Herzöge von Sachsen-Wittenberg und Kurfürsten von Sachsen aus askanischem Geschlecht*, 2 vols, (Leipzig, 1888–1893), ii, pl. xxix nos 1 (Rudolf I, d. 1356), 7 (Rudolf II, d. 1370).
 - 21 Sauter, *Fürstliche Herrschaftsrepräsentation*, pp. 200–06.
 - 22 Sava, 'Siegel', 12 [3b], p. 174 and pl. viii.
 - 23 R. Götz, *Die Herzöge von Teck. Herzöge ohne Herzogtum* (Schriftenreihe Stadtarchiv Kirchheim unter Teck 33) (Kirchheim unter Teck, 2009).
 - 24 Peltzer, *Rang*, p. 249; Posse, *Die Siegel der Wettiner*, ii, pl. xxix sq.
 - 25 Hofmann, *Urkundenwesen*, p. 138 (Ludwig II).
 - 26 Schöntag, 'Amts-, Standesbezeichnungen', pp. 146–55, 160–4.
 - 27 R. Laurent, *Les sceaux des princes territoriaux belges du X^e siècle à 1482*, 2 vols, (Brussels, 1993), i, pp. 256–72.
 - 28 Schöntag, 'Amts-, Standesbezeichnungen', pp. 151/2.
 - 29 H. Bier, 'Die Entwicklung der Siegeltypen der Markgrafen und Kurfürsten von Brandenburg', in *Brandenburgische Siegel und Wappen. Festschrift des Vereins für Geschichte der Mark Brandenburg zur Feier des hundertjährigen Bestehens 1837–1937* (Berlin, 1937), ed. E. Kittel pp. 14–33.
 - 30 Schöntag, 'Reitersiegel', passim.
 - 31 The flag could also be used by the king to invest non-princely lords with their fiefs, K.-F. Krieger, *Die Lebenshoheit der deutschen Könige im Spätmittelalter (c. 1200–1437)* (Untersuchungen zur deutschen Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte NF 23) (Aalen, 1979), pp. 36–42. But the investiture by flag was by and large associated with the Imperial princes.
 - 32 J. Ehlers, *Heinrich der Löwe* (Munich, 2008), pp. 265–8.
 - 33 S. Schlinker, *Fürstenamt und Rezeption. Reichsfürstenstand und gelehrte Literatur im späten Mittelalter* (Forschungen zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte 18) (Cologne, 1999), pp. 53–70.
 - 34 Laurent, *Les sceaux*, i/2, p. 359.
 - 35 Laurent, *Les sceaux*, i/2, pp. 359–61.
 - 36 *La chronique de Gislebert de Mons*, ed. L. Vanderkindere (Recueil de textes pour servir à l'étude de l'histoire de Belgique) (Brussels, 1904), pp. 255, 262/3, 299.
 - 37 V. Rödel, '6. Oktober 1214. Die Belehnung Herzog Ludwigs I. mit der Pfalzgrafschaft bei Rhein', in *Bayern nach Jahr und Tag. 24 Tage aus der bayerischen Geschichte* (Munich, 2007), eds A. Schmid and K. Weigand, pp. 122–40.
 - 38 Hofmann, *Urkundenwesen*, pp. 49–52.
 - 39 *Sachsenspiegel. Landrecht*, ed. K.A. Eckardt (MGH Fontes iuris Germanici antiqui, NS 1/1) (Göttingen, 1973), III 52 § 3.
 - 40 The arenga (introduction) of a charter Ludwig issued in 1214 in favour of the monastery of Schönau near Heidelberg shows that he was acutely aware of the sword as symbol of the judge and his own position as judge: *Cum non sine causa index gladium portet scire nos convenit qui gladio cingimur...*, *Monumenta Wittelsbacensia. Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte des Hauses Wittelsbach*, ed. F. M. Wittmann, (2 vols, Munich, 1857/1861, repr. Aalen, 1969), i, no. 6 (= *Regesten der Pfalzgrafen am Rhein 1214–1400*, ed. A. Koch and J. Wille [Regesten der Pfalzgrafen am Rhein 1214–1508 1], (Innsbruck, 1894), no. 3). However, it would be too far-fetched to consider this an explicit reference to a particular palatine judicial authority.
 - 41 Hofmann, *Urkundenwesen*, p. 78.
 - 42 Ibidem, p. 79.
 - 43 Laurent, *Les sceaux*, i/1, pp. 273/4; i/2, p. 491.
 - 44 See above, n. 13.
 - 45 Bier, 'Die Entwicklung der Siegeltypen der Markgrafen und Kurfürsten von Brandenburg', pp. 23–4 and pl. iv no. 1 (1385) (Sigismund); H. Drös, 'Löwe, Rauten, roter Schild. Zum Wappen der pfälzischen Wittelsbacher im Spätmittelalter', in *Der Griff nach der Krone. Die Pfalzgrafschaft bei Rhein im Mittelalter. Eine Begleitpublikation zur Ausstellung der Staatlichen Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg und des Generallandesarchivs Karlsruhe* (Schätze aus unseren Schlössern. Eine Reihe der Staatlichen Schlösser und Gärten Baden-Württemberg 4) (Regensburg, 2000), ed. V. Rödel, pp. 105–16, at pp. 110–12.
 - 46 The different authority attributed to the large and small seals can be seen, for example, in *Wittelsbachische Hausverträge des späten Mittelalters. Die Haus- und staatsrechtlichen Urkunden der Wittelsbacher von 1310, 1329, 1392/93, 1410 und 1472*, ed. H. Rall, (Schriftenreihe zur bayerischen Landesgeschichte 71) (Munich, 1987), pp. 169–70, no. 7.
 - 47 See above, n. 24.
 - 48 Harvey and McGuinness, *A Guide*, p. 43.
 - 49 A short up-to-date biography of Hugh de

- Neville is provided by D. Crook, 'Neville, Hugh de (d. 1234)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004); online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ubproxy.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/view/article/19942>, accessed 23 Oct 2013]; a slightly fuller discussion of his seal can be found in A. F. Pollard, 'Neville, Hugh de', in *Dictionary of National Biography*, (63 vols, London, 1885–1900), xl, pp. 260–2.
- 50 For the various ways in which noblemen used their coats of arms to express their ambitions, affiliations and associations, see Ailes, 'Heraldic Marshalling', *passim*.
- 51 Heslop, 'The seals of the twelfth-century Earls of Chester'.
- 52 *ibid.*; Ailes, 'Knight's Alter Ego'.
- 53 The use of a double-sided seal to communicate two different dignities was, of course, no invention of the thirteenth century, but stretches back to William the Conqueror, who used one side of his great seal to portray him as king of England, the other as duke of Normandy. The double-sided seal of Robert of Meulan is an early example from among the magnates. The obverse showed him as count of Meulan, the reverse as earl of Leicester. D. Crouch, *The English Aristocracy 1070–1272. A Social Transformation* (Yale, 2011), fig. 7.
- 54 I am grateful to David Crouch for directing me to Roger's seal, Durham Cathedral Muniments, Medieval Seal G&B, no. 2045 (<http://reed.dur.ac.uk/xtf/view?docId=ead/dcd/dcdmseal.xml;query=durham%20school#PRSQ>, last visit 19/02/2013).
- 55 W. H. St John Hope, 'A Palatine Seal of John, Earl of Warenne, Surrey and Stratherne, 1305–1347', *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 27 (1914), 123–7; M. Nishimura and D. Nishimura, 'Rabbits, Warrens, and Warenne: the Patronage of the Gorleston Psalter', in *Tributes to Lucy Freeman Sandler. Studies in Illuminated Manuscripts* (London, 2007), eds K. Smith and C. Krinsky, pp. 205–18, at pp. 206–7, 213–4.
- 56 Dafydd ap Llywelyn, prince of Gwynedd, used a double-sided seal in 1241 that showed a ruler enthroned with upright sword in his right hand on the obverse and on the reverse a mounted knight. In this case the enthroned ruler probably served to emphasise Dafydd's claim to superiority over the other Welsh lords. It has also been suggested that Dafydd's uncle King Henry III tolerated and possibly even facilitated the usage of this design to accord Dafydd a rank superior to the English earls, *The Acts of Welsh Rulers, 1120–1283*, ed. H. Pryce, (Cardiff, 2005), pp. 88–9; Crouch, *Aristocracy*, pp. 93–4, 246. In the Empire, Konrad, landgrave of Thuringia (d. 1240), who entered the Teutonic Order in 1234 and became his grandmaster in 1239, used the image of a man sitting on a throne on his large seals 1233–34. This is a unique case among the Imperial princes, M. Werner, 'Ludowinger', in *Höfe und Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen Reich. Ein dynastisch-topographisches Handbuch* (Residenzenforschung 15.1), (Ostfildern, 2003), eds W. Paravicini, J. Hirschbiegel and J. Wettlaufer, pp. 149–54, at pp. 151/2. This seal came to my attention too late to be fully analysed here.
- 57 C. Neville, *Native Lordships in Medieval Scotland: the earldoms of Stratbearn and Lennox, c. 1140–1365* (Dublin, 2005), p. 35.
- 58 *ibid.*, pp. 2, 17–35.
- 59 On these seals, see A. Ailes, 'Powerful impressions: Symbols of office and authority on secular Seals', in Cherry and Payne (eds), *Signs and Symbols*, pp. 18–28; J. Cherry, 'Heads, Arms and Badges: Royal Representation on Seals', in *Good Impressions*, eds Adams *et al.* (2008), pp. 12–16.
- 60 When taking up his office as bishop of Durham in 1345, John Hatfield introduced a great seal to be used in his capacity as lord palatine. This double-sided seal showed on the obverse the bishop seated on a throne in majesty and on the reverse the bishop as mounted knight. In this case the seated bishop probably takes up the motif of the seal used by Hatfield's predecessor Richard de Bury in palatine affairs. Richard's small single-faced seal shows St Cuthbert as bishop on a throne. Hatfield, as a successor to Cuthbert, seems to place himself in this tradition by the design of the obverse of his great seal. It thus refers primarily to his dignity as bishop of Durham. The palatine dignity, by contrast, is referred to by reverse: the bishop as mounted knight. On the seals of the bishops of Durham, see C. H. Hunter Blair, 'Medieval seals of the bishops of Durham', *Archaeologia* 72 (1922), 1–24, at pp. 16/7.
- 61 TNA, DL 27/324; Ellis, *Personal Seals*, ii, p. 54, P 1535.
- 62 Hunter Blair, 'Armorial', pl. 11; Ailes, 'The Knight's Alter Ego', p. 11.
- 63 W. H. St John Hope, 'The Cap of Maintenance', in L.G. Wickham Legg, *English Coronation Records* (Westminster, 1901), pp. lxxxii–lxxxviii, at p. lxxxii.
- 64 Birch, *Catalogue*, i, pp. 22/3 no. 161 (second seal), pp. 24–8 nos 183, 186, 210, 224.
- 65 *Ibid.* ii, p. 221 no. 5551 (great seal as prince of Aquitaine and of Wales), p. 221/2 no. 5552, p. 222 no. 5554, p. 223 no. 5557; M. Sharp, 'A Jodrell Deed and the seals of the Black Prince', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 7 (1922), 106–117.
- 66 TNA, DL 27/159 (1356); Birch, *Catalogue*, iii, p. 383, no. 12676.

- 67 Birch, *Catalogue*, iii, p. 386, no. 12691 (John); p. 388, no. 12700 (Lionel).
- 68 *Ibid.*, iii, p. 381, no. 12671 (Edmund) [= Ellis, *Personal Seals*, ii, P 1328]; p. 393, no. 12723 (Thomas).
- 69 *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England 1275–1504. V. Edward III, 1351–1377*, ed. M. Ormrod, (London, 2005), p. 152, nos 36–37; St John Hope, ‘Cap’, pp. lxxxii–lxxxiii.
- 70 Ellis, *Personal Seals*, ii, P 2106, pl. 30.
- 71 Adrian Ailes makes this point in relation to the marshalling of aristocratic coats of arms, ‘Heraldic Marshalling in Medieval England’, in *Les combinaisons d’armoiries par les personnes privées. Les brisures de bâtardise*, (Canterbury, 1995), pp. 15–29.
- 72 J. C. Holt, ‘Feudal society and the family in early medieval England. I. The Revolution of 1066’, *TRHS* 5 ser. 32 (1982), 193–212, at p. 199; S. Waugh, *The Lordship of England. Royal wardships and marriages in English society and politics, 1217–1327*, (Princeton, 1988), pp. 16–17.
- 73 It is in this context rather than in the alleged need to distinguish father and sons on a battlefield that the origins of the principle of cadency should be sought. For a different view, see P. A. Fox, ‘The medieval origins of the British system of cadency’, *The Coat of Arms*, 3 ser. 4 (2008), 21–8, at p. 21.
- 74 C. R. Humphrey Smith, ‘The origins of the English system of cadency’, in *Brisures, augmentations et changement d’armoiries* (Brussels, 1988), pp. 97–124.
- 75 Ellis, *Personal Seals*, ii, P 1530 (Earl Henry), P 1531 (Henry, his son).
- 76 *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain, and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, or Dormant*, ed. G. E. Cokayne et al. (13 vols, London, 1910–1959), vi, p. 469 note i. *W. Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel, (6 vols, London, 1817–1830), vi, p. 135.
- 77 Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 520 no. 7547.
- 78 Ellis, *Personal Seals*, ii, P 1058.
- 79 *Ibid.*, ii, P 1066. This remained the design of his seal after he was created earl of Northampton in 1337, *ibid.* P 1067 (where the three stars are described as three mullets of six points); Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 522 no. 7557 (three stars). No seal of Humphrey de Bohun, the second eldest surviving son of Humphrey VII de Bohun, exists for the period of his father’s or his brother’s rule in the collections of the British Library or TNA. When he became earl of Hereford and Essex in 1336 he used the traditional Bohun coat of arms, Ellis, *Personal Seals*, ii, P 1064; Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 519 nos 7534–7.
- 80 Birch, *Catalogue*, ii, p. 380 no. 12665.
- 81 According to a well-informed chronicle it was Duke Henry who had ordered his two younger sons Ludwig and Stephan to accept Otto’s government, ‘Continuatio Altahensis a. 1273–1290’, ed. P. Jaffé, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores* (so far 39 vols., Hanover, 1826–[2009]), xvii, pp. 408–416, at p. 415.
- 82 *Monumenta Wittelsbacensia. Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte des Hauses Wittelsbach*, ed. Wittmann, , ii, no. 198, cf. also the household ordinance of 1293, *ibid.*, no. 190.
- 83 Munich, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Hochstift Regensburg, Urkunden, no. 163 = edited without description of the seals in *Monumenta Wittelsbacensia. Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte des Hauses Wittelsbach*, ed. Wittmann, ii, no. 204.
- 84 Schnurrer, *Urkundenwesen*, pp. 36–43.
- 85 ‘Die Goldene Bulle’, ed. W. D. Fritz, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum*, (so far 12 vols., Hanover/Weimar 1893–[2013]), xi, pp. 535–633, c. 7.

Making a mark in medieval London: the social and economic status of seal-makers

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When Count Amadeus of Savoy visited London in 1292, he went shopping and purchased such things as saddles, gloves, knives, and two silver seal matrices.¹ Amadeus was a wealthy man who could afford luxuries, but nonetheless the range of his purchases is an indication of the extraordinary variety of goods available in the city. These goods, of course, were all made and sold by particular people. The copious written records from medieval London offer considerable information on the city's merchants and craftsmen, but it can be difficult to determine how much social standing they had and how profitable their various types of work were.² The purpose of this paper is to investigate the artisans who specialised in engraving seal-matrices in the period c. 1200–1330.³ Matrices were made from a range of different materials, including bone, ivory or stone, but from the thirteenth century the preferred material was metal.⁴ People used seal matrices to make seal-impressions, and these survive in significant numbers attached to documents. Despite the considerable evidence for the nature of their work, the artisans who engraved the seal-matrices have received little attention from scholars.⁵ Although it has been argued that the men who specialised in this work had relatively little social and economic standing, this paper contends that they were often well respected and prosperous.

London offers an ideal focus for an

investigation of the business of seal-making. The sigillographic evidence is extensive and testifies to the types of seals in circulation.⁶ There is also a rich variety of documentary sources that show how Londoners used them. Seals were important in London partly because they were tools of validation and authentication. When a Londoner placed a seal on a document, it demonstrated his or her consent to its contents. An indication of the gravity of this act is the complex rules and processes that the Londoners employed to inhibit the misuse of seals.⁷ Londoners used seals to validate and authenticate documents, but seals could also serve as status symbols. Kings exploited this capacity of seals from an early date, and they were soon followed by other elites, including London's leading men.⁸ Although the importance of seals is easy to establish, it is more difficult to discern how the business of making them was organised. The seal-makers who served the crown are well known, and they were not necessarily representative.⁹ Fortunately, the written sources, which include civic and royal administrative documents as well as records of property conveyance, provide considerable information on the inhabitants of the city. These records enable scholars to identify less distinguished seal-makers, and to set them in their social, spatial and economic contexts.

The earliest known seal-maker in England is

Anketil, who was both a monk and a goldsmith at St Albans Abbey during the twelfth century. He was a skilled metal-worker and is described as *aurifaber incomparabilis*.¹⁰ He was involved in fabricating a shrine for the relics of St Alban, but he was also a moneyer and a seal-maker.¹¹ Indeed, he fell out of favour with the abbot of St Albans when he was suspected of fabricating a seal to use fraudulently.¹² For the purposes of this investigation, Anketil's case is important because it demonstrates that seal-making was a facet of the work of goldsmiths in the twelfth century. Anketil was not a Londoner, but the city too had a notable community of skilled goldsmiths and moneyers.¹³ Thus at the end of the twelfth century, when a substantial numbers of Londoners were adopting seals, there were plenty of artisans in the city who had the skills needed to fabricate them.¹⁴ Nonetheless, it is not until the mid-thirteenth century that London seal-makers start to be mentioned by name in the sources.

Several men based in London and its surrounding area made seals for Henry III in the early to mid-thirteenth century. Walter de Ripa (also known as Walter the Goldsmith) engraved one in 1218.¹⁵ There are indications that he was active in the London region. He is difficult to trace in the written records, but there is a strong candidate with a connection to the city.¹⁶ Moreover, it has been argued, based on stylistic evidence, that Walter also made a seal for the city.¹⁷ In the mid-thirteenth century Edward son of Odo (also known as Edward of Westminster) took charge of fulfilling many of Henry III's commissions, which included paintings, buildings and goldsmith work. Edward probably had 'practical working knowledge of goldsmithy', but his role was largely administrative.¹⁸ He was not a citizen of London but rather a resident of Westminster. Yet Lancaster argues that Edward bought most of his supplies through London merchants and recruited labour locally as well. In 1259, Edward was overseeing the fabrication of a new seal for the king himself and asked William of Gloucester to fulfill the commission.¹⁹ William was certainly a Londoner, and thus he offers the earliest known example of a London goldsmith involved in seal-making.

William was a prominent, successful and socially well-connected Londoner.²⁰ He married into an established London family: his wife was Joan, daughter of Michael de

St Helena (sheriff of London 1231–32 and alderman of Aldersgate ward within the period 1217–40).²¹ Lancaster has summarised the history of William's association with the Crown. He contributed to many of the king's projects in the 1250s and 1260s, and his importance was recognised by his appointment as 'king's goldsmith'.²² Moreover, he also offered some administrative assistance to the Crown, which included overseeing minting. Nonetheless, he remained identified with the city. For example, he was part of a delegation of Londoners sent by the city to the king in 1265.²³ His property holdings included land in the parishes of St Michael le Querne and Nicholas Shambles.²⁴ William's predecessors in the property in St Michael le Querne included Ralph de Frowic, goldsmith, and Thomas of Canterbury, goldbeater. The established association of the property with goldsmiths suggests that this could have been where William operated his business.²⁵ Certainly this was a part of the city where people expected to find goldsmiths. Immediately to the east was an area known as the 'aurifabria', or goldsmiths' quarter.²⁶

Seal-making was an occasional activity for William. As a goldsmith, he specialised in making goods from precious metal. The king commissioned him to make not only a seal, but also plate, censers and chalices. Thus seal-making was part of a prestigious goldsmith's activities, and the same was likely true of goldsmiths more generally.²⁷ For example, in 1354–55, the goldsmith Henry Lyrpol was accused of using 'false metal' to fabricate a girdle, a seal and two small plates for cups.²⁸ Notwithstanding his fraudulent attempt to pass off his creations as silver, amongst the items was a seal. Also indicating that seal-making was an important part of the work of goldsmiths are regulations of the craft, set down in the fourteenth century, which mention 'engravers of seals'.²⁹ However, the goldsmiths focussed on working with gold and silver, and there were many people who could not afford a seal made from these materials.³⁰ Indeed, seal matrices recovered in an archaeological context show that many were made from less costly metals, such as bronze, brass, pewter or lead.³¹ Thus there was a market for less costly seals, and the goldsmiths probably left much of this work to other artisans, who were probably members of a variety of other crafts. Elspeth Veale has argued that, in the fourteenth century,

craftsmen who worked with non-ferrous metals normally made a wide range of different types of objects, including both simple and complex ones.³² Therefore, there are a number of groups of craftsmen in London that could have been involved in seal-making, such as coppersmiths and pewterers, and it is probable that they also made a significant contribution.³³

Although goldsmiths and other types of metal-workers made seals, from the thirteenth century there were craftsmen who are identified specifically with this activity.³⁴ Adam the Sealmaker (*factorem sigillorum*) is mentioned in a judicial record of 1252–53.³⁵ A deed recording an exchange, dated February 1270, includes Peter ‘Sigillarius’ in the witness list.³⁶ Henry de Keles ‘Sigillarius’ was party to an exchange which occurred in 1277–78.³⁷ One way to compare them to the goldsmiths is to consider their economic standing. Tax records from 1292 and 1319 survive and they offer scholars one way to evaluate the relative wealth of different groups of craftsmen.³⁸ Based on this information, Derek Keene has proposed that c. 1300 the metal-workers were stratified into different groups of varying economic standing. He distinguishes four levels, which he asserts reflect the value of the metals used by the craftsmen, their capacity to add value to them and the role they played ‘in coordinating different productive processes’.³⁹ Keene contends that the sealers fit within the least wealthy group, together with the plumbers, spurriers, smiths and wire-drawers. As he locates the goldsmiths in the most wealthy group, this suggests that the business of seal-making was shared between at least two groups of craftsmen with contrasting levels of economic standing. However, the number of sealers that have been identified in the tax rolls is small, and consequently their assessments may not be representative.⁴⁰ To determine where the sealers fit in the economic hierarchy, the lives of the artisans who specialised in making seals need to be investigated in detail.

The careers of several late-thirteenth and early fourteenth-century sealers can be traced. The seal-maker Henry de Keles [A] was active until c. 1282, and was thus a contemporary of William of Gloucester.⁴¹ Henry had a wife named Alice, and he held land in at least two parts of the city: in the parish of St Botolph without Aldersgate, and on Old Fish Street, adjacent to the bell-tower of St Paul’s Cathedral



Fig. 5.1 Second seal of Alice wife of Henry de Keles [A]. Ø 36 × 21 mm. LMA MS 25121/1496.

on the western side of the Cathedral’s precinct, in the parish of St Martin le Querne.⁴² Henry acquired the latter plot of land in 1269, when it was described as a vacant area where a shop could be built.⁴³ This was an appropriate place to sell seals, for it was only metres from Cheapside and the ‘aurifabria’ where people looking to buy fine metal-work congregated due to the concentration of goldsmiths’ shops.⁴⁴ Moreover, the cathedral was a place associated with document production.⁴⁵ In 1283, following his death, the dean and chapter of St Paul’s leased a house, described as abutting the bell-tower and once held by Henry, to his wife Alice.⁴⁶ The legend on the seal she applied to the document recording the lease describes her as: ‘[AL]ICIE [L]E SELLER’ (Fig. 5.1).⁴⁷ Thus, she may well have continued Henry’s business. Henry de Keles was less prosperous than William of Gloucester, but the size and location of Henry’s property holdings suggests that he was a man of considerable economic standing.

Part of Henry’s legacy may have been a group of descendants who continued to make seals well into the fourteenth century. Among the goldsmiths active in the early fourteenth century, a remarkable number used the surname ‘de Keles’, and some of them made seals for royalty. Thomas de Keles, goldsmith, borrowed £15 from a merchant in 1312.⁴⁸ William de Keles, goldsmith, witnessed

a property exchange in the parish of St Giles Cripplegate in 1299, which suggests he was active in the north-west of London; the same year he borrowed 48s from the alderman Adam de Fulham.⁴⁹ William was commissioned to make a seal for Edward I's second queen, Margaret, in 1306.⁵⁰ While William de Keles is recorded borrowing money, Simon de Keles, goldsmith, is known to have lent it: in 1307 he provided 40s to Edmund Lambyn.⁵¹ Simon was commissioned to make a seal for Edward II.⁵² The coincidence of the names, together with their involvement in goldsmith work and seal-making, suggests that Thomas, William and Simon were perhaps apprentices, sons, or even grandsons of Henry de Keles [A]. However, they were all regarded as goldsmiths, rather than sealers.

A stronger case can be made for a connection between Henry de Keles [A] and Henry de Keles [B], who is described as a sealer in his will, which was enrolled in 1318.⁵³ He had a wife named Salerna, a son named Didier, and houses in the parish of St Botolph without Aldersgate. Henry [B]'s ownership of land in this part of the city is significant because Henry [A] also held land there.⁵⁴ Together with the coincidence of their names and occupations, this suggests that Henry [B] may have been a descendant of Henry [A]. Henry [B] can be placed in the ward of Aldersgate from the mid-1280s. He is included in a muster list for Aldersgate Ward, which has been dated 1292–96.⁵⁵ He acted as a witness to property conveyances in the parishes of St Botolph without Aldersgate, as well as in the parish of St Anne and St Agnes, which was immediately inside the gate, on several occasions.⁵⁶ As well as locating him in this part of the city, his repeated appearances as a witness demonstrate that he was well respected.⁵⁷ So does the fact that Henry was appointed, on at least two occasions, to act as a representative of his ward. In 1297, he was one of two men called from his ward to consult with the aldermen on civic ordinances.⁵⁸ In 1298, he was one of four men summoned to discuss a proposed civic tax.⁵⁹ Thus, during his lifetime, he was a prominent man in that part of the city.

Henry [B] was also a prosperous craftsman, as an inquest in 1301 into the death of John Kyngeessone, paternoster-maker, shows. He was involved in an altercation with Thomas Willeday that began in Henry's house, which

was located outside Aldersgate. After he was assaulted by Thomas Willeday, John Kyngeessone tried to flee to the house of John Lamb, paternoster-maker, who was Henry's tenant.⁶⁰ Thus in addition to confirming that Henry lived in Aldersgate, the case reveals that Henry had his own tenants. Another indication of his wealth is that in 1292 he acted as a surety for the prior of St Bartholomew's Smithfield.⁶¹ The most direct way to evaluate Henry's economic standing would be to examine the amount he paid in tax; unfortunately, the return for Aldersgate is missing from the records for the tax of 1292. Moreover, Henry had died by 1318, so he is not on the tax rolls of 1319. However, his wife Salerna continued to reside in Aldersgate after his death; she was assessed at 3s 2d, which is an indication that Henry left her valuable assets, for the minimum tax in 1319 was 6½d.⁶² Thus the economic standing of Salerna, Henry's widow, is a further indication that he accumulated substantial wealth.

The 1319 tax rolls list other sealers, including Robert Newcomen.⁶³ He had interests in properties in a variety of locations both inside and outside London, and he may have shifted his place of residence during the course of his life. In 1311, he acquired a five-year lease on a shop in the parish of St Mary Colechurch from Henry son of Hugh de Rokyngham, goldsmith.⁶⁴ The shop was on Cheapside, in the heart of the goldsmith district, and opposite the city's water conduit, and thus in an excellent location for retail activity. His will indicates that he had a house on Fleet Street, in the parish of St Bride, so that is where he may have resided, at least later in his life.⁶⁵ However, in 1319 Robert was taxed as a resident of the ward of Farringdon Within, which did not cover either of those parishes.⁶⁶ At that date, he was probably regarded as a resident of the parish of St Martin le Querne.⁶⁷ Robert witnessed a property exchange in that parish in 1321.⁶⁸ He held a shop there, which he leased to William Newcomen.⁶⁹ His charitable activity, as will be discussed in more detail below, also suggests that he had a strong affinity to this particular parish. Robert had considerable property on the outskirts of the city. In 1325 he made a grant to St Bartholomew's Hospital which included his interests in 37 acres (c. 15 ha) in the parishes of St Giles and St Botolph without Aldersgate.⁷⁰ Geographically his properties were dispersed, but they were valuable.

Robert's social network is also well documented. Robert married twice, and one of his wives was the daughter of the mercer William le Callere.⁷¹ Robert also associated with goldsmiths: he acted as executor for the goldsmith Thomas Rys, and Robert appointed as one of his own executors the goldsmith Thomas Warener.⁷² Robert Newcomen's own will reveals further information about his social network. He was predeceased by his brother Gilbert, and Robert provided money for his children, including a marriage portion for his daughter, which suggests that he took some of the responsibility for their upbringing. Robert's brother John and three sisters, Johanna, Isolde and Eleanor, were still alive when he prepared his will. Robert provided substantial gifts for them, and also remembered several of their husbands, wives, and children.⁷³ Robert only mentions one direct descendant, his daughter Agnes. However, Robert had a particularly close relationship with his niece Margaret and her husband William. Robert left to Margaret household items, including silver spoons, and appointed her and her husband to act, with Thomas Warener, as his executors. However, there are hints that Robert did not entirely trust William. He owed Robert ten pounds, and Robert ordered him 'on peril of his soul' to use the money to pay a chantry chaplain for a term of three years. Robert also enjoined William to pay Agnes rent for the shop in St Michael le Querne, and he specified that if William did not pay she would have the right to lease the shop to someone else. The shop and its lease must have been a point of contention between the two men. Indeed, when Robert's will was presented in the Husting court, William contested this provision.⁷⁴ In addition to developing social connections with other prominent Londoners, Robert had a large extended family to which he offered significant financial support.

Robert made provisions for charitable gifts in his will, but he also made important gifts before his death. In 1324, he was in the process of establishing a chantry in the church of St Michael le Querne.⁷⁵ As already mentioned, in 1325, he made a substantial grant to St Bartholomew's Hospital which was intended to support two chaplains.⁷⁶ Although Robert may already have divested himself of many of his assets before his death, his will reveals the belief that his estate could provide for further

gifts. He directed half a mark to St Paul's Cathedral, and additional cash and material gifts to the hospitals of St Bartholomew, St Mary Bishopsgate and St Thomas Southwark, as well as several parish churches.⁷⁷ However, the focus of his charity remained the church of St Michael le Querne. He wanted to be buried before the altar 'of our Lady', and he provided funds for its clerks and its fabric as well as his chantry. Robert wanted an impressive funeral. He provided 20s for wax and 'other expenses' and 40s for masses sung on the day of his interment. These charitable and pious interests indicate that he was wealthy enough to make important gifts to a number of organisations in the city.

Whether Robert Newcomen, Henry de Keles [A] and Henry de Keles [B] were representative of sealers in late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century London is difficult to determine. Ekwall only identified one sealer in the records for the tax of 1292 ('Simon le Seler' of Vintry ward) and he was charged 2s (the lowest sum assessed in that tax). Ekwall also identified two sealers on the rolls of the 1319 tax; in addition to Robert Newcomen, Ekwall suggests that Adam le Seller (Coleman Street ward), who was assessed at 20d, practised the craft. This was significantly less than the half mark assessed on Robert Newcomen. As the sums assessed on Simon, Adam and Robert suggest, within this occupational group there were artisans with a range of levels of economic standing. This may have been in part the result of differing levels of skill, and consequently a varying capacity to take lucrative commissions from wealthy clients, but it probably also reflected varying positions in the life-cycle. Men at the beginning of their careers had accumulated less wealth than their better-established colleagues. Adam was probably a relatively young man in 1319, because he continued to be active until 1332, when the records of another tax survive. This time he was assessed at 8s, which suggests that he had improved his economic situation between 1319 and 1332.⁷⁸ Robert Newcomen as well as Henry de Keles [A] and [B] were successful businessmen, but there is little evidence that they were truly exceptional members of their craft.

The economic standing of the sealers suggests that they made high quality goods for wealthy clients, but because they did not sign

Fig. 5.2. Seal of Henry de Keles [A]. Ø 26 mm. LMA MS 25121/4.



Fig. 5.3. First seal of Alice wife of Henry de Keles [A]. Ø 32 × 20 mm. LMA MS 25121/4.



Fig. 5.4. Seal of Robert Newcomen. Ø 24 mm. LMA MS 25121/42.



their work it is not easy to identify particular pieces that they made. However, presumably seal-makers engraved their own seals, or at the very least directed their fabrication in their own workshops. Thus it seems likely that Henry [A] made his own seal, which is round, 26mm in diameter and presents a radial motif formed by four branches with leaves in the angles (Fig. 5.2).⁷⁹ Moreover, Henry probably also engraved the seal his wife Alice used during his lifetime (Fig. 5.3).⁸⁰ She had a pointed oval seal, 32 × 20 mm. The four central 'petals' are surrounded by a wealth of ornamentation, including a star and a crescent. Radial motifs were fashionable in this period, so there is nothing exceptional in the use of those motifs. However, their fine engraving demonstrates that Henry was a skilled craftsman. An impression of the seal of Robert Newcomen also survives (Fig. 5.4).⁸¹ It is round and 24 mm in diameter. At the centre is a shield displaying a lion set within an elaborate border. This too was a common motif for its time, for between the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries the fashions in seals changed.⁸² Seals with radial motifs declined in popularity, while shields-of-arms became more common. Consequently the most distinctive aspect of Robert's seal is once again not the motif it displays, but the quality of its execution. The seal's most remarkable feature is its legend, in which the letters are separated by interlocking half-circles: a dramatic demonstration of the engraver's skill. Thus both Henry and Robert used seals which advertised their competence as craftsmen.

One way to gauge the relative quality of the workmanship of the sealers is to compare their seals with those of goldsmiths, who could also make seals. The nature of their seals suggests that they could use them to advertise their technical skills and to identify themselves with their craft. Deodatus the Goldsmith, for example, was a contemporary of Henry de Keles [A]. He appears as a witness to an exchange of land in the parish of All Hallows Bread Street in 1277–78, which suggests he was associated with that part of the city.⁸³ He also acted as an executor for the draper Roger Beynin, who held land in several parts of the city, including St Mildred Bread Street.⁸⁴ Deodatus had at least two different seals which share a similar design. The first is a rounded oval, 25 × 20 mm, with a male face intertwined with a beast; two impressions dated 1277–78



and 1286–87 of this seal are known (Fig. 5.5).⁸⁵ His second seal, which he used on a document dated 1277–78, is a rounded oval, 23 × 17 mm, which displays two male faces intertwined with a horse's head and back legs (Fig. 5.6).⁸⁶ The two seals are unmistakably different, but their similarities underline Deodatus' desire to be associated with this type of device. The intricate engraving testifies to an exceptional technical facility and suggests a certain visual sophistication. Another goldsmith, William de Faringdon, who was active within the period 1265–94, had a contrasting seal. He was associated with the north-west of London, where he held land in the parish of St Sepulcher Holborn and served as alderman for the ward of Farringdon, but he was certainly acquainted with Deodatus because he acted as a witness for him on at least one occasion.⁸⁷ William's seal displays an ornate covered cup flanked on either side by broaches (Fig. 5.7).⁸⁸ Once again, this is high quality engraving, but the motif also announces William's occupation. The objects represented on his seal were fabricated by goldsmiths; moreover, the motif appears on another contemporary goldsmith's seal, and it was adopted as part of the company's emblem by the fifteenth century.⁸⁹ Through his seal, William was asserting his identification with the goldsmith's craft. Seals were a flexible medium of communication and they could be used to make a wide range of different types of statements, as the seals of these two goldsmiths suggest. Nonetheless, both the

goldsmiths and the sealers had the capacity to produce high quality goods, and thus the similarities in their economic standing are easier to explain. The sealers, just like the goldsmiths, had specialised and sophisticated skills that enabled them to add considerable value to the materials they worked with.

Evaluating the importance and place of seal-making in the economy of London as a whole is difficult. The artisans who specialised in it never organised themselves into a formal

Fig. 5.5. (far left) First seal of Deodatus the Goldsmith. Ø 25 × 20 mm. LMA MS 25121/1561.



Fig. 5.6. Second seal of Deodatus the Goldsmith. Ø 23 × 17 mm. LMA MS 25121/1562.



Fig. 5.7. Seal of William de Faringdon. Ø 24 mm. LMA 25121/205.

craft.⁹⁰ Without a strong corporate identity, they were not able to control the business and thus foster favourable economic conditions for themselves. Moreover, metal-workers in this period tended to focus on a particular material, rather than a type of object. As seals could be made from a wide range of metals, the sealers faced competition from other metal-workers, most notably the goldsmiths. Indeed, the boundary line between 'sealer' and 'goldsmith' was porous. Certainly goldsmiths regarded seal-making as a normal, if occasional, part of their work, while the artisans who specialised in seal-making (the sealers) may occasionally have accepted commissions to make other types of objects normally produced by goldsmiths. Surviving blank seals and moulds for casting seals demonstrate that sealers or other metal-workers (such as pewterers, coppermiths, or brassmakers) sometimes used techniques of mass production in the making of seals.⁹¹ Nonetheless, the seals used by the sealers themselves suggest that this was not a polarised market with high-quality seals fabricated exclusively by goldsmiths and low-quality ones by sealers. Given the many gradations of wealth in civic society, sealers such as Henry de Keles [A] and [B] and Robert Newcomen probably served the city's prosperous merchants and craftsmen who wanted seals made from less costly materials yet with high-quality engraving. Indeed, the sealers may have left the bottom end of the market to other metal-workers. Therefore, although only a small number of artisans specialised in seal-making at any point in time, this did not reflect limited demand for their products. On the contrary, the existence of sealers as an identifiable occupational specialisation, in the face of competition from other metal-workers, testifies to strong demand for seals in London.

Seals are a significant part of the visual and cultural legacy of medieval England. People used them as identifiers and status symbols, but each one was made by a particular artisan. Although seals survive in significant numbers, the identity of their makers is not easy to establish. The thirteenth century witnessed the emergence of seal-making as an occupational specialty. The survey of the records conducted for this paper has added a few more men, and perhaps one woman, to the list artisans who specialised in making seals. More importantly,

they have been set in their social, spatial and economic contexts. The sealers were not far removed, in many senses, from the goldsmiths who were the city's most prestigious metal-workers. The sealers and the goldsmiths lived and worked in the same area of the city, were socially connected, and had a similar level of economic standing. In effect, the artisans who specialised in engraving seals were a type of specialist goldsmith.⁹² However, the production of seals in London involved a broad range of the city's metal-workers, including many other types of metal-workers. The establishment of seal-making as an occupational specialty in London reminds us that this was a society in which seals had a central cultural and judicial significance.

Notes

- 1 The seals are mentioned in the midst of a series of entries concerning purchases in London: A. J. Taylor, 'Count Amadeus of Savoy's visit to England in 1292', *Archaeologia* 106 (1979), 125–6.
- 2 This paper is based on an ongoing prosopographical research project focussed on medieval London. For overview of some of the key sources, see: J. A. McEwan, 'The aldermen of London, c. 1200–80: Alfred Beaven revisited', *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society* (2012), 178–81, and below, fn. 6.
- 3 Sigillographers writing in English have traditionally used the term 'seal' to refer to both the matrix (or die) and the impressions of it left in wax: P. D. A. Harvey and A. McGuinness, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (London, 1996), p. 1. However, the term 'seal' is also commonly used to refer the graphic elements manifested in the impression, and for some scholars this facet of the concept is central to their definition: B. Bedos-Rezak, 'Seals and sigillography, Western European', in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. J. R. Strayer (New York, 1988), p. 123. To avoid confusion, these three distinct senses of the term have been made clear in this essay. The term 'seal' has been reserved for the graphic elements, and the terms 'seal matrix' and 'seal impression' have been used for those objects; cf. *Vocabulaire International de la Sigillographie*, ed. R. H. Bautier (Rome, 1990), s.v. 'sceau', 'matrice de sceau' and 'empreinte', pp. 44, 46–7. See also: B. Bedos-Rezak, 'In search of a semiotic paradigm: the matter of sealing in medieval thought and praxis (1050–1400)', in *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, eds N. Adams, J. Cherry and J. Robinson (London, 2008), pp. 3–4.
- 4 T. A. Heslop, 'Seals as evidence for metalworking in England in the later twelfth century', in *Art*

- and *Patronage in the English Romanesque*, eds F. H. Thompson and S. Macready (London, 1986), pp. 50–1.
- 5 M. Pastoureau, *Les Sceaux* (Turnhout, 1981), p. 34.
 - 6 For a brief introduction to the evidence from London, see: J. A. McEwan, 'The seals of London's governing elite in the thirteenth century', in *Thirteenth Century England XIV*, eds J. E. Burton *et al.* (Aberystwyth, 2013), pp. 44–5. At the time of writing, the sigillographic dataset from which the evidence for this paper is drawn contains information regarding more than 2000 seal impressions. They are largely attached to documents relating to landholding in London: D. Keene and V. Harding, *A Survey of Documentary Sources for Property Holding in London before the Great Fire* (London, 1985). The National Archives is an important source of material. For an introduction to their seal collection, see: C. H. Jenkinson, *A Guide to Seals in the Public Record Office* (London, 1968); R. H. Ellis, *Catalogue of Seals in the Public Record Office: Personal Seals* (London, 1978–81); R. H. Ellis, *Catalogue of Seals in the Public Record Office: Monastic Seals* (London, 1986). St Paul's Cathedral also has an important collection, which is currently available at the London Metropolitan Archives: *Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts: Ninth Report* (London, 1883–84), pt 1, pp. 1–59. Previously the collection was held at the Guildhall Library, where it had the reference MS 25121. The deeds are now known as LMA CLC/313/L/H/001/MS25121. For the purposes of this article, this will be shortened to LMA MS 25121. The deeds of St Bartholomew's Hospital are another valuable resource. Many of the deeds were copied into the hospital's cartulary: *Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital, Founded 1123: A Calendar*, ed. N. J. M. Kerling (London, 1973). The remainder are accessible through a card index in the search room. When deeds from this repository are cited, the number from Kerling's calendar of the cartulary will be listed in brackets after the deed number, for example: SBH deed 1(25). Significant numbers of deeds also survive in a number of other repositories, including the British Library, the archives of Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral. There is also some archaeological evidence: B. Spence, 'Medieval seal-dies recently found at London', *Antiquaries Journal* 64 (1984), 376–82.
 - 7 J. A. McEwan, 'Occupation and identity in Medieval London', in *The Medieval Merchant*, eds C. M. Barron and A. Sutton (Donnington, forthcoming).
 - 8 B. Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego Was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2011), pp. 28–9; McEwan, 'Seals of London's governing elite', p. 54.
 - 9 H. S. Kingsford, 'Some English Medieval seal-engravers', *Archaeological Journal* 97 (1940); J. A. Lutkin, 'Goldsmiths and the English Royal Court, 1360–1413' (University of London, Ph.D. Thesis, 2008), pp. 200–03; Jenkinson, *Guide to Seals in the Public Record Office*, p. 10; cf. E. A. New, 'Representation and identity in medieval London: the evidence of seals', in *London and the Kingdom: Essays in Honour of Caroline M. Barron*, eds M. P. Davies and A. Prescott (Donnington, 2008), p. 248.
 - 10 *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani, a Thoma Walsingham, Regnante Ricardo Secundo, Ejusdem Ecclesie Præcentore, Compilata*, ed. H. T. Riley, 3 vols (London, 1867), vol. 1, p. 83.
 - 11 Heslop, *Seals as Evidence for Metalworking*, pp. 51–2. He may also have been involved in manuscript illumination: O. Pacht, 'The full page miniatures', *The St. Albans Psalter* (Albani Psalter) (London, 1960), p. 177.
 - 12 C. C. Oman, 'The goldsmiths at St Albans Abbey during the 12th and 13th centuries', *St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Transactions* (1932), p. 219.
 - 13 F. Stenton, 'Norman London', in *Social Life in Early England; Historical Association Essays*, ed. G. Barraclough (London, 1960), pp. 201–2; P. Nightingale, 'Some London moneyers and reflections on the organisation of English mints in the 11th and 12th Centuries', *Numismatic Chronicle* 142 (1982), pp. 34–50.
 - 14 On the seals in twelfth- and early thirteenth-century London, see: J. A. McEwan, 'Formation of a Sealing Society: London in the Twelfth Century', in *Medieval Coins and Seals: Constructing Identity, Signifying Power*, ed. S. Solway, (Turnhout, forthcoming 2014).
 - 15 T. D. Hardy, *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum in Turri Londinensi Asservati*, 2 vols (London, 1833–44), vol. 1, pp. 381, 383.
 - 16 In 1206, a Walter de Ripa was contesting William son of Reiner's claim to some land in Essex. The dispute originated in a family quarrel. William son of Reiner's father, Reiner son of Berenger, had acquired the land from Roger de Fraxineto, who married Walter de Ripa's grandmother Ada; Walter claimed the land as heir of Beatrice, the daughter of Ada: *Pleas before the King or His Justices, 1198–1202*, ed. D. M. Stenton, 4 vols (London, 1952–67), vols 3–4, nos 2469, 3277, 3287; *Curia Regis Rolls of the Reigns of Richard I And John*, ed. C. T. Flower, 7 vols (London, 1931), vol. 5, pp. 142–3. William was a member of a family that was prominent in civic politics during this period. His father, Reiner, was a sheriff of London in the mid-twelfth century. Two of William's brothers also held civic

- offices: Henry was an alderman while Richard was a sheriff: Susan Reynolds, 'The rulers of London in the 12th Century', *History* 57 (1972), p. 355. For an impression of William's seal, see TNA E42/312. His dispute with Walter was resolved in 1210, when William paid Walter 50 marks. Doris Stenton argues that the way the case progressed indicates that Walter was able to apply to the king himself: Stenton, *Pleas before the King or His Justices, 1198–1202*, vol. 3, pp. xxv–xxvi. This is significant because the man commissioned to make Henry III's seal was probably an established and prosperous craftsman who was known in royal circles. By 1218, the Walter de Ripa who claimed land in Essex would have been active for over a decade and had access to the Crown. Moreover, he had the financial means to pursue his case against a member of one of London's most important and influential families. Thus this Walter de Ripa may also have been the seal-maker.
- 17 T. A. Heslop, 'Seals of the City of London', in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, eds J. Alexander and P. Binski (London, 1987), p. 273, cf. p. 115. For the dating of the seal, see: E. A. New, 'The Common Seal and communal identity in Medieval London', in *Medieval Coins and Seals: Constructing Identity, Signifying Power*, ed. S. Solway (Turnhout, forthcoming 2014); D. Keene, 'Text, Visualisation and Politics: London, 1150–1250', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (2008), p. 77.
 - 18 R. K. Lancaster, 'Artists, suppliers and clerks: the human factors in the art patronage of King Henry III', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972), p. 99.
 - 19 *Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office*, 6 vols (London, 1916–64), vol. 4, p. 472.
 - 20 His position in civic society is difficult to establish precisely; nonetheless Lancaster's contention that William was *not* a 'leading citizen' is difficult to accept: Lancaster, 'Artists, suppliers and clerks', p. 93. For civic social structure in this period, see: S. Reynolds, *An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 74–80, 137–3; D. Keene, 'London from the Post-Roman Period to 1300', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 1: 600–1540, ed. D. M. Palliser (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 205–07.
 - 21 LMA CLA/023/DW/02, no. 8; McEwan, 'The Aldermen of London, c. 1200–80', p. 189; G. A. Williams, *Medieval London, from Commune to Capital* (London, 1963), p. 67.
 - 22 William died in 1269: Lancaster, 'Artists, suppliers and clerks', p. 93; R. Cassidy, 'The Exchanges, Silver Purchases and Trade in the Reign of Henry III', *British Numismatic Journal* 81 (2011), p. 108.
 - 23 *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs of London*, ed. H. T. Riley (London, 1863), p. 84.
 - 24 These parishes were north of the cathedral precinct and at the western end of Cheapside, London's main market street: M. D. Lobel, 'The City of London, from Prehistoric Times to c. 1520', *The British Atlas of Historic Towns v.3* (Oxford, 1989).
 - 25 LMA MS 25121/ 207, 292–295. For the property in the parish of St Nicholas Shambles, see: BL Add Ms 10661.
 - 26 Kerling, *Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital*, nos 759, 866; W. O. Hassall, *Cartulary of St Mary Clerkenwell* (London, 1949), no. 350.
 - 27 Oman, 'The goldsmiths at St Albans Abbey', p. 231.
 - 28 *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls: Preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall A.D. 1323–1364*, ed. A. H. Thomas (Cambridge, 1926), pp. 242–3. He was convicted of the offence and forbidden from practising his trade for six months.
 - 29 *Wardens' Accounts and Court Minute Books of the Goldsmith's Mystery of London, 1334–1446*, ed. L. Jefferson (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2003), p. 135.
 - 30 Goldsmiths did make seal matrices from other metals on occasion: *Issues of the Exchequer: Being Payments Made out of His Majesty's Revenue During the Reign of King James I: Extracted from the Original Records Belonging to the Ancient Pell Office*, ed. F. Devon (London, 1836), 1836pp. 242 and 246.
 - 31 Spence, 'Medieval Seal-Dies Recently Found at London', p. 377. Based on the archaeological record, it is difficult to determine how common were seals of precious metal, partly because they were more likely to be recycled. In 1321–22, for example, among the silver items delivered by the keeper of the exchange of London for melting and minting into coins was a broken seal: Devon, *Issues of the Exchequer*, p. 135. Thus seals of precious metal are probably under-represented among the finds. On the purchase of silver by the Crown for minting, see Cassidy, 'The Exchanges, Silver Purchases and Trade in the Reign of Henry III'.
 - 32 *Studies in London History* E. M. Veale, 'Craftsmen and the Economy of London in the Fourteenth Century', in eds A. E. J. Hollaender and W. Kellaway (London, 1969), p. 147.
 - 33 For a fifteenth-century case of a coppersmith making a seal: C. Blair, 'An early fifteenth-century London latoner', *Monumental Brass Society Bulletin* 38 (1985), p. 129.
 - 34 For the purposes of this essay, men who specialised in seal-making will be called 'sealers'.
 - 35 *The London Eyre of 1276*, ed. M. Weinbaum

- (London, 1976), no. 33. A terminological ambiguity makes it difficult to establish precisely when sealers first appear in London. The byname 'seller' or 'sellarius' commonly meant saddler, but 'seller' was also occasionally used to identify sealers. For example, Adam le Seller was also called *selgraver* and R. Newcomen, is alternatively called *seler* and *sigillarius*. *Two Early London Subsidy Rolls*, ed. E. Ekwall (Lund, 1951), p. 357. Thus, when a person is described as a 'seller' in the records, the assumption must be that he was a saddle-maker, but it is possible that in some cases it may mean seal-maker.
- 36 SBH deed 756 (173).
 37 LMA MS 25121/4.
 38 The assessments were conducted by wards, and the 1319 assessment is complete, whereas a few wards are missing for 1292: Ekwall, *Two Early London Subsidy Rolls*, pp. 3, 6.
 39 D. Keene, 'Metalworking in Medieval London: an historical survey', *Historical Metallurgy* 30 (1996), p. 96.
 40 See below, p. 81.
 41 Henry de Keles [A] needs to be distinguished from Henry de Keles [B]: see below. Sharp suggests that the name 'Keles' may mean 'Calais': *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London, A.D. 1258–A.D. 1688*, ed. R. R. Sharpe, 2 vols (London, 1889), vol. 1, p. 275; cf. A. C. H. Menche de Loisne, *Dictionnaire Topographique Du Département Du Pas-De-Calais Comprehendant Les Noms De Lieu Anciens Et Modernes* (Paris, 1907), p. 79.
 42 LMA MS 25121/4; R. Macleod, 'The topography of St Paul's precinct, 1200–1500', *London Topographical Record*, 26 (1990), pp. 11–12.
 43 LMA MS 25121/1495. For two additional references to Henry de Keles, see: *Calendar of Letter-Books Preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London and the Guildhall*, ed. Reginald R. Sharpe, 11 vols. (London, 1899–1912): LBA, pp. 15–16; LMA MS 25121/1500.
 44 Indeed, one of Henry's neighbours was William of Gloucester, who also held land in the same parish, as already mentioned.
 45 In the mid-fourteenth century a parchment maker occupied a room in the bell-tower itself: Macleod, 'The topography of St Paul's precinct, 1200–1500', p. 12.
 46 LMA MS 25121/1496.
 47 See below, fn. 80.
 48 Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*: LBB, p. 33.
 49 LMA MS 25121/1013; Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*: LBB, p. 93.
 50 T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England; the Wardrobe, the Chamber, and the Small Seals*, 6 vols. (Manchester, 1920–33), vol. 5, p. 132, fn. 3.
 51 Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*: LBB, p. 200.
 52 Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England*, vol. 5, p. 132, fn. 4–5.
 53 Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, vol. 1, p. 275.
 54 Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*: LBA: pp. 15–16.
 55 TNA E 101/13/39, m.7.
 56 TNA E326/2008; Kerling, *Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital*, nos 409–11; M. T. Martin, *The Percy Cartulary* (Durham, 1911), nos 1341, 1345; see also LMA MS 25121/1426.
 57 Another indication of his social standing is that he acted as an executor for Gregory le Bokeler, a fellow Londoner: Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*: CLB, p. 161.
 58 Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*: CLB, p. 237.
 59 Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*: CLB, p. 246.
 60 John then fled outside the city with two companions who also practised his craft. They spent the night outdoors, but John was killed by watchmen who mistook them for robbers: *Calendar of Coroners Rolls of the City of London, A.D. 1300–1378*, ed. R. R. Sharpe (London, 1913), pp. 27–8.
 61 Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*: LBC, p. 10.
 62 Ekwall, *Two Early London Subsidy Rolls*, p. 305.
 63 *ibid.*, p. 316.
 64 Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*: LBD, 248. For a history of the property, see: 'St Mary Colechurch 105/9', *Historical gazetteer of London before the Great Fire: Cheapside; parishes of All Hallows Honey Lane, St Martin Pomary, St Mary le Bow, St Mary Colechurch and St Pancras Soper Lane* (1987), pp. 444–7.
 65 The will is dated April 1330 and was proved in the Husting in May 1330: British Library, Harley Charter, 54 A 46; Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, vol. 1, p. 358. Note that the content of the will is not fully reported in the copy enrolled in the Husting.
 66 Ekwall, *Two Early London Subsidy Rolls*, p. 316. He was assessed at ½ mark in tax, which places him in the top quartile of the city's taxpayers.
 67 This is the same parish where William de Gloucester and Henry de Keles [A] had earlier been active.
 68 Sharpe, *Calendar of Letter-Books*: LBE, p. 166.
 69 BL, Harley Ch. 54 A 46.
 70 Kerling, *Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital*, nos 233, 446, 447; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Edward II*, 5 vols (1894–1904), vol. 5, pp. 117, 153.
 71 Kerling, *Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital*, no. 446; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls: Edward II*: vol. 4, p. 396.
 72 LMA MS 25121/42; British Library, Harley Charter, 54 A 46. Both Thomas Rys and Thomas Warener were resident of Farringdon Within ward: Ekwall, *Two Early London Subsidy Rolls*, p. 315.
 73 Robert provided 20 shillings for both Johanna

- and Isolde, and forgave Eleanor a debt of two marks: BL, Harley Charter, 54 A 46.
- 74 Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, vol. 1, p. 358.
- 75 *Calendar of the Patent Rolls: Edward II*: vol. 4, p. 396.
- 76 Kerling, *Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital*, nos 233, 446, 447; *Calendar of the Patent Rolls: Edward II*, vol. 5, pp. 117, 153; BL, Harley Charter, 54 A 46.
- 77 BL, Harley Charter, 54 A 46.
- 78 Margaret Curtis, 'The London lay subsidy of 1332', in *Finance and Trade under Edward III*, ed. G. Unwin (London, 1918), p. 86.
- 79 LMA MS 25121/4, 1495.
- 80 LMA MS 25121/4. By contrast, the seal Alice used after Henry's death, which has already been mentioned, is a pointed oval 36 × 21 mm: LMA MS 25121/1496 (Fig. 5.1). The seal is slightly larger than her first seal and presents a radial pattern, but the execution of the design is less sophisticated: the thick strokes fill the available space and there is little embellishment. The shift in the character of the engraving suggests that it is not Henry's work.
- 81 LMA MS 25121/42. For a discussion of radial motifs in this period, see E. New, '(Un)conventional Images. A case-study of radial motifs on personal seals' in this volume pp. 151–60.
- 82 T. A. Heslop, 'Peasant seals', in *Medieval England 1000–1485*, ed. E. King (Oxford, 1998), 214–15; Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide to British Medieval Seals*, pp. 88–93.
- 83 Kerling, *Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital*, no. 734.
- 84 LMA MS 25121/1561–1563; Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, vol. 1, pp. 29–30. These parishes were south-east of the Cathedral.
- 85 LMA MS 25121/1561, 1563.
- 86 LMA MS 25121/1562.
- 87 LMA MS 25121/ 404, 1561; McEwan, 'The Aldermen of London, c. 1200–80'.
- 88 LMA MS 25121/140, 205, 404.
- 89 McEwan, 'Occupation and identity in Medieval London' (forthcoming). It has been suggested that by the mid-fourteenth century some goldsmiths may have been using a related but simpler motif to identify their occupation: New, 'Representation and Identity', p. 255.
- 90 Veale, *Craftsmen and the economy of London*, p. 141.
- 91 M. Campbell, 'Gold, silver and precious stones', in *English Medieval Industries: Craftsmen, Techniques, Products*, eds J. Blair and N. Ramsay (London, 1991), pp. 119–20; R. A. Linenthal and W. Noel, *Medieval Seal Matrices in the Schøyen Collection* (Oslo, 2004), nos 402–03, pl. 24.
- 92 Pastoureaux, *Les Sceaux*, p. 34.

Seals and stars. Law, magic and the bureaucratic process (twelfth–thirteenth centuries)*

Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak

The chanceries of rulers in the central Middle Ages, with their professional mixture of diplomacy and diplomatics, were in a very real sense laboratories for experimentation in the fermentation of scholarship and ideology. In such crucibles learning, administrative practices, and scholarly tools were expected to produce a particularly complex alloy, official documents endowed with authority, instrumentality, and warranty. In the spatio-temporal framework under consideration, northern France, England, Italy, and Germany between 1050 and 1300, this written output included diplomas, privileges, bulls, charters, and mandates, that is, objects emblazoned with words, graphic signs, and images for the purpose of effectively conveying orders, decisions, actions, grants, and laws (Fig. 6.1). An expanding stream of petitions, complaints, charges and counter-charges, and appeals also needed careful responses drafted by men with expertise in biblical and legal texts.

The task of devising, expressing, and communicating governmental decisions was entrusted to scribes, notaries, sealers, whose work was supervised by chancellors. Chancellors played a major role in the overall administrative structure of the court or household they served, including such responsibilities as the judicial system and the vicarious representation

of a ruler in his absence. Most continental chancery staff was professionally, indeed often university, trained. Chancellors in particular, who were likely to have had extensive schooling, and frequently held academic titles as masters, retained contact with fellow graduates, and remained au courant with intellectual trends, to which they often contributed their own scholarship. Chancellors thus brought to their bureaucratic task an understanding of linguistics and dictaminal arts, of law, logic, natural sciences, and theology.¹

In this paper,² I will argue that challenges involved in designing effective documentary forms for bureaucratic processes were very much related to larger issues, scholarly and political, concerned with the agency of mediated and material communication. Documents tested the role of texts and artefacts in practice, and had to contend with the ways in which institutional documentary culture could produce crises of signification even as it undertook to affirm and circulate the truthfulness of official actions. The instrumentality of documents was predicated upon a proper integration of material format, rhetorical modes, and graphic design, a system within which seals anchored the equilibrium of the whole. In thus engaging the notion

Fig. 6.1 *Archives nationales, Paris, J 168 no 24. Detail: Seal and Monogram of King Louis VIII (d. 1226)*



of causality in relation to truth, textual form, and material support, sealed documents became a rich site of speculation for medieval theologians, natural philosophers, lawyers, and rhetoricians. These interactions between scholarly discourse, governmental praxis, and material semiotics yielded a secondary language, one that came to extend beyond the norms enunciated to regulate the operation of seals in society, and thus challenged the very organising principles of governmental practice and ruling authority.

Although documentary seal usage was adopted by high ranking lay ecclesiastical potentates throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the expanding presence of seals seems to have remained unnoticed in legal texts of that era,³ a period nevertheless known for an expanding interest in law, attested by the many legal collections produced between 1050 and 1150.⁴ In the mid-twelfth century, neither of the two versions of Gratian's *Decretum* (c. 1139 and c. 1158) had anything to say on seals even though the *Decretum* was concerned with the genuineness, credibility, and authority of written instruments.⁵ Gratian framed his discussion of documentary authentication within a logic derived from late Roman material. According to this logic, documentary

effectiveness hinged upon an objective element, the concordance between the document and the reason of the law, as well as a subjective element, the intent of the beneficiary, holding that a document obtained under mendacious pretenses was inadequate.⁶ In support of his canon, Gratian introduced a novel criterion: the formal and technical property that attaches to an original and authentic document which, unlike any subsequent copy (*exemplum*), had been issued directly by its author.⁷ Original authorship implies authenticity and authority, Gratian suggested, because the danger of fabrication could only come from the fallacious request of a dishonest beneficiary. The *Decretum*, thus, firmly associated documentary authenticity with original authorship, on the assumption that a beneficiary's request had to be properly verified prior to its actualization as a document.

Despite their absence in the *Decretum*, seals nevertheless received textual notice within the very documents to which they were affixed. Their consideration indicated two lines of thought. One, rather marginal within charters, concerned forgery. In bulls addressed by Pope Gregory VII (d. 1085) to Robert Guiscard in Sicily, and to Robert, count of Flanders, the pope took care to state in the final clauses that he had abstained from appending the leaden bullas for fear that they might be stolen and forged.⁸ Explicitly, the only remedy for forgery, was abstention.

A more sustained and more pro-active theme in diplomatic discourse construed seals as impressed images of their owners,⁹ less a technology of power than a mark of authorial presence. Sealing mobilised the body, and in more ways than one. Seal iconography displayed a human figure clad in attractive contemporary dress, inviting sensual appreciation (Fig. 6.2). The attachment of seals to documents was a public ceremony, often accompanied by such additional personal gestures of commitment as kisses, oaths, or the signing of oneself (and of the document) with the sign of the cross.¹⁰ The sealing technique of imprinting was itself a physical affair, requiring manual labor, contact, and touch. Seal making could further involve the inclusion within the wax of hair, fingerprints (Fig. 6.3), and tooth bites, dramatising a logic of referential immanence whereby seals embodied their owners.¹¹ Whereas the *Decretum* considered the form

of documents to represent their authors, the post-millennial sealed charter extended the author's original attendance by enacting his continuing presence.

This incarnational vocabulary also belonged to the conceptual world of twelfth-century biblical exegesis and anthropological theology. Thus, while noting the silence of the *Decretum* concerning sealed charters, it would be unwise to ignore other twelfth-century learned discourses, wherein seals provided a recurrent metaphor that articulated both the dual nature of Christ and man's creation in the image of God. God was the metallic substance of the seal matrix, with Christ, the consubstantial image engraved within it. Man was that seal's impression, imprinted in the image of God by the divine seal, his path to salvation signified by the seal of baptism, and even further facilitated by sealed charters that recorded gifts made to saints for the benefit of his soul.¹² Schoolmen who interpreted the Bible and investigated human nature to provide guidance so that man might conform to the image of God were also the men who inscribed on parchment the gifts and transactions made by parties to legal acts. Such textual associations, both physical and metaphorical, situated sealed documents within the exegetical semantics of holy texts. Indeed, when school masters actually described, rather than metaphorically deploying, seal usage, they did so in the context of lecturing and disputing on theological matters. Thus, when Peter the Chanter (d. 1197), the cathedral chanter at Notre Dame of Paris and foremost theologian of his time, considered whether ecclesiastical chancellors ought to charge for their scribal services, he conceded that they might properly receive fees for the parchment and the ink, but not for the seal, since: 'The bishop might appear to sell his justice when he sells his image by allowing his notaries to charge for pen, ink, seal, parchment, and wax. The bishop grants his notaries fees for their labor, but thereby gives the appearance of committing an act of simony?'¹³

This position, which was later reversed by Pope Innocent III (d. 1216), was typical of twelfth-century notions of the seal as an extension of the person, bridging and blurring the distinction between self and text, ego and imago.



Fig. 6.2 Seal of Raoul of Meulan, knight, appended to a charter of 1255. Archives nationales, Paris J 224 no. 1.



Fig. 6.3 Obverse, and reverse (with Finger Prints) of the seal of Raoul, abbot of Saint-Martin aux Jumeaux (Amiens), 1207. Archives nationales, Paris, J 168 no. 16.

The twelfth-century seal, thus anchored in theology, was a sign addressed to the divine in order to establish ties of sympathy in the hope of obtaining spiritual benefits. The seal's efficacy

derived from its imprinted character, which endowed it with something of an intrinsic virtue, as did the impression of God upon man and in his moral life. Impressibility was also the presumptive mechanism for understanding the manifestations of astral powers, which were in fact described as *sigilla*, as seals. This particular aspect of the agency of *impressio* is of special import because it originated from an Arabic tradition and, in ascribing power to images via the principles of natural philosophy, was to intersect dramatically with Christian thought in the course of the thirteenth century.¹⁴

Seals were commonly present in the hermetic and pseudo-solomonic literature of astral magic that, then newly translated from Arabic into Latin by Muslim and Jewish scholars, began to circulate in early thirteenth century-Europe (in France and England in particular).¹⁵ In such texts, seals were understood to be images, imprints of the figures of constellations or planets, whose power they thus concentrated so that it could be used to change one's destiny. The 'art' of astral seals presented Latin theoreticians with the problem of distinguishing between nature and demons when considering occult efficacy. Their attempts to separate naturalistic from demoniac processes reveal the substantial challenges inherent in sealing and the semiotic logic of its imprinting process. For such processes situated the seal among natural signs, that is, signs which, as smoke is to fire, entertained a causal relation of haptic contiguity with their objects. Seals affixed to documents were in and of themselves the material and visible marks of originating contacts, to the seal-matrix and to the human hands that applied it to the wax and had caused the seal-impression to be made. Additionally, seals were considered effective signs. Firstly, they synthesised a contact between things (hands, wax, matrix) into a visually accessible appearance of the relation of touch that took place between these things. Then too, seal impressions implied a mutual dependency between themselves and their originators, creating a framework of authorship in which sealed documents acquired authorisation and authority.

William of Auvergne (d. 1249), a familiar of both the regent Blanche of Castile (first regency, 1226–1234) and of the young Louis IX (d. 1270), was a master of theology at

the University of Paris and, by 1230, bishop of that city. He was no stranger to the use of documentary seals, which he applied frequently in his episcopal capacity.¹⁶ William's encounter with seals, however, was not limited to the world of political and administrative affairs. Through his early acquaintance with magical texts recently translated into Latin from the Arabic, William confronted, among other prodigies, the operations of astral seals.¹⁷

His ferocious denunciation of such operations must be considered against the background of his respect for natural philosophy, and of his support for the scientific investigation of nature. Indeed, William may have been among the first scholars to defend the notion of natural magic in the west.¹⁸ He did so in *De Legibus* (c. 1228–1230) and in *De Universo* (c. 1231–1236),¹⁹ describing natural magic as belonging to the natural sciences.²⁰ William's endorsements of natural magic hinge upon two different concepts of nature. In one, nature is a creation of God's will and natural magic is situated within the intrinsic character of things (such as stones) granted them by the Creator.²¹ However, in the other notion, nature is the physical world resulting from a series of material causal contacts.²² William emphasises that:

'things follow upon [divine art], and not the other way around. Nor do they come from [divine art] by a natural operation, but by the most free choice and most imperious will. For if they were from the divine art by a natural operation, as imprints from seals or impressions, it would be of necessity ordered to the things imprinted or impressed through it [but it is not].'²³

As this passage makes clear, the seal is here seen as a paradigm illustrating the necessary attributes of natural phenomena, contiguity and the materiality of causation, even as the seal's mechanical mode of replication serves to distinguish natural processes from the supernatural, that is, the free and unlimited agency of God's will in the creation of the world.

Thus, William's treatment of astral seals hinged upon an awareness of the challenge they brought, as imprints, to his attempt at clarifying the difference between the natural and the supernatural, and the relationship between the physical (causality) and the spiritual (will). As a natural sign, operating on the basis of its intrinsic character and by means of contact to a willing sealer, the physical seal appeared to

incorporate matter and spirit, and to act as (the embodiment of) a willing person. In inveighing strongly against the efficacy of astral magic, thus, William had to contend with the power of a particular image, the seal impression, whose wide use around him, indeed by him, had created an expectation that seal images implicate both human and non-human entities in their performance of personhood.

In view of his cultural environment, it was perhaps inevitable William's treatment of astral seals would directly prompt a discussion of royal seals.²⁴ The analogy he drew between astral and documentary seals was rooted in terminology, where the term *sigillum* designated both objects, but for William the analogy extended beyond semantics to encompass aspects that he saw as being common to both kinds of seals: their technique of production (imprint), their modes of signification (haptic and iconographic), and their efficacy. William was primarily concerned with the latter, with the fact that both kinds of seals could influence human affairs. His first use (in *De Legibus*) of the royal seal to debunk demonic practices, significantly follows a discussion of the natural power of certain stones (sapphire, diamonds), which he opposed to claims that statues and images might receive similar powers by means of execrable incantations (*execrabilibus consecrationibus*).²⁵ Nevertheless, William recognised that there are artefacts and images, which do have an efficacious power. He wrote:

‘Those wax images representing lambs receive from the papal blessing their capacity to ward off thunderbolts... Just as the royal seal, or the sign of any potentate, protects and makes safe those in its receipt from any who are subjects of the king, not by its own virtue but by the royal will and power, similarly, blessed images protect by divine virtue and at the pleasure of the Creator’.²⁶

This text is susceptible to several possible implications. First, terrestrial powers, be they of the pope, the king, or a potentate, are seemingly granted the same force as God's supernatural power, that of rendering images effective. Second, William's argument reveals a contemporary perception that seals, like papal wax amulets, operated with apotropaic powers.²⁷ Third, William's use of wax images might imply the naturalistic causality of the imprint, the possibility of an etiological chain beginning with the king, or the pope, or the

stars, which could result in the natural power of their seals.²⁸

Given these two latter possibilities, William was compelled to distance seal efficacy from any possibility of a natural origin. He therefore denied wax impressions all agency and located the latter solely in the will and intention of sanctioned individuals.²⁹ In the first premise of his argument, he dissociated the efficacy of seals from their material dimension, on the grounds that, ‘whatever is being said elsewhere, matter has neither the capacity of being sentient nor the ability to receive animation’.³⁰ Having proclaimed matter impotent, inessential, and irrelevant to agency, William then attacked as stupid (*stultitia quorundum hominum*) the notion ‘that materials formed into sculptures, writings, pictures, or impressions derived from such figures the power of achieving wonders’.³¹ In the terms of William's concern for etiology, it was impossible for figures to cause effects naturally (*naturaliter*), for neither figures nor their material support could be a source of agency. As he switched to a semiological perspective, William was even more radical: figures and letters could signify nothing as natural signs, unless one considered that they indicated their authors, that is, the artists and the scribes who were their immediate cause. Such a signifying mode, however, could neither impart any power of agency to things nor be operative in itself. Having thus denied iconographic and inscribed artefacts all meaning and efficacy, William was careful to insist that it is only as *natural* signs that such artefacts are meaningless and powerless. Indeed, William immediately asserted the opinion that artefacts might be operative as *conventional* signs, that is, signs which people have agreed to institute as such. These references to natural and instituted signs were borrowed from Augustine's (d. 430) own theory of signs, given in *De Doctrina Christiana*.³² William then proceeded to cite an example of actions legitimately performed by signs:

Examples of actions performed by signs are conspicuous among kings and their subjects. Royal letters, impressed with the ring or the king's image circulate among the subjects, who trust and obey them, out of a pact of obedience, by which they are bound to their king. And the kings themselves, out of a pact by which they are bound to truth and justice, must without deceit express their will by this kind of sign.³³

William gave further examples of similar signs (*similia signa*), by which men and

corporations might obligate themselves, such as subscriptions in documents, which are signs of agreements (*pacta*) and of certain types of contracts commonly called chirographs. It is thus unsurprising, William noted, that their worshippers address the Demon and communicate with him using this type of sign, signs that can have no effective value of their own but operate only by convention, by means of an agreement with the Demon. Searching for yet another example of conventional signs, William then offered a comparison with the sacraments: *sicut et signa sacra, quibus utitur Christiana religio, non ex virtute sua naturalia aliqua, sed ex Dei altissimo pacto*.³⁴ His analysis of effective images has thus encompassed sealed charters, magical signs, and sacraments, organizing them into a unified referential system.

William returned to the question of seal agency in *De Universo*, considering the role of resemblance, such as that existing between an image and its model, in endowing images with power. He argued (counter-intuitively it might appear) that were such invariably the case, the image of the king would oblige all subjects of the kingdom to obedience; no one would or could pose any resistance.³⁵ William then pursued a comparison with the royal seal to reject the idea that celestial images could effectively imprint astral seals with force on the assumption that printing had occurred when the star was astrologically dominant:

‘Despite the veneration of the king at the time the royal image is fabricated, this image will not command the kingdom’s obedience. The king’s well-being, prosperity, and happiness at the time his image is made will have no bearing on the power or virtue of his image’.³⁶

William negated any possibility of natural or logical explication of seal efficacy, astral or royal, by rejecting the actual indexical dimension of the royal seal whereby the imprinted royal image possessed a relationship both causal and contiguous with the king. Whereas twelfth-century anthropological theology had exploited the indexical nature of the imprint to empower the operation of signs and seals in society, for William the only circumstances in which imprinted images could be operative was when they acted as conventional signs, that is, when a meaning had been attached to them by human consensus. William’s radical reversal of the

previous understanding of seal efficacy was located within his discussion of astral seals, and possibly indicates a growing perception that the effectiveness of seals and other imprinted images might be ascribed to some forms of inherent, illegitimate, powers. His commentaries thus engaged contemporary attitudes toward seals and sealing. However, the consequence of denying signs any inherent capacity came at a cost, the concomitant weakening of mediated ruling authority, and a blurring of the distinction between legal and demonic activities.³⁷

My preliminary analysis of the basis for contemporary understanding of the authority of seals in thirteenth-century legal discourse echoes William’s radical position only faintly. Several such bases were constructed during this period. One was articulated around the concept of the *sigillum authenticum*, axiomatically establishing the seal as a self-referential sign, as a sign capable of absolute signification, without any reference to contextual parameters. Another, concerned with forgery, emphasised the seal’s physical integrity as a source of self-referentiality. In yet another, the seal’s authority hinged upon the moral personality of its owner and the contractual nature of his ruling authority. A final approach predicated seal agency upon resemblance to and consequent recognition of its owner.³⁸

Contemporary medieval intellectuals were baffled by this wide range of legal opinions concerning seals. Complaints emerged from the epistolographic discipline known as the *dictamen* or *ars dictandi*. Conrad of Mure (1210–81) declared, in his *Summa de arte prosandi* of 1275, that:

‘in this short work, it would not be appropriate for him to explain the reason why some seals were held to be authentic and others not, since lawyers’ positions on the subject had been diverse and contradictory’.³⁹

Conrad, then, proposed his own view on seals.⁴⁰ He wrote:

‘Requirements for the production of perfect letters ... It takes two things to accomplish a man: a body and a soul. Similarly, it takes two things to accomplish a letter: the force of the words, which is the soul, and the seal, which is the body. From which it follows that the words of salutation and of the letter must conform to the seal. ... Make sure that there is no discrepancy between the title the sender used in the

salutation and the seal, that is, both the seal image and the seal legend. If a sender qualifies himself as a bishop or an abbot, and the seal displays the image of an equestrian in arms or a lion and has a comital legend, the whole thing is totally inconsistent and absurd. Hence as the philosopher [Horace] has said “neither head nor foot can be formed into a single shape”.⁴¹ ... Given their need to expedite arduous business, princes must always have their seals nearby and under good guard. And no letters, except very simple ones, must be sealed with the princely seal without knowledge of the prince, and proper control and examination by the chancellor or his deputies.⁴²

Conrad’s brief description of the sealing process in chancery is empirical and accurate enough. Two paragraphs later, when discussing the form of seals, Conrad deploys a new image:

‘Even as the log turns into a small beam, so does the sign become the seal. And the sign is what offers itself to the senses, leaving something to the intellect, like the circle hanging before the tavern signals that there is wine for sale in the tavern.’⁴³

This passage is difficult but fascinating: Log and beam, sign and seal, circle and wine. Starting with the last pair: the *circulus vini*, an ubiquitous wording used in sacramental theology to denote a conventional sign, was very much present in the treatises by Peter Lombard (d. 1160), Richard Fishacre (d. 1248), and particularly in Roger Bacon’s (c. 1214–92) *De signis*.⁴⁴ The difficulty, in Conrad’s text, is that the relationship of log to beam, which is immanent, generative, and causal, does not fit the signifying mode of the *circulus vini*, which is arbitrary and conventional. The log-beam tandem suggests that the seal is an effect, and as such is the sign of its cause. By situating the seal between matter producing form from within and convention producing form from without, Conrad awkwardly navigates the long tradition of uncertainty concerning the semiotic categories, natural or intentional, to which seals belong. That he himself had to compare the sealed document to a man, and had to draw on Horace’s *Ars Poetica* to state the importance of the conformity between the author of a document and his or her seal further testifies, at least to me, that by the end of the thirteenth century, seals and sealing practice did not easily fit current analytical categories.

In conclusion, therefore, a broader question must be raised, concerning the eventuality of mutually constitutive developments between actual seal usage and confused learned discourses about seals.

By the end of the thirteenth century, in France and in England, most individuals were no longer using personal seals; they resorted, rather, to anonymous seals provided by the scribes responsible for drafting their documents,⁴⁵ or by the institutional seals of royal or ecclesiastical administrators.⁴⁶ In the French royal chancery this period witnessed the introduction of the signature, the intense proliferation of graphic marks on the documents meant to signal control, and the diffusion of illustrated charters containing royal portraits in full regalia within their initials.⁴⁷ In light of such diplomatic innovations, one may wonder if the theoretical uncertainties posed by conceptions of seals as signs dependent upon the theory of a voluntary acceptance of their significance may not have compromised the ability of such signs effectively to project power and authority in political affairs.

Notes

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1 *Cancellariae cultura nel medioevo*, ed. G. Gualdo (Rome 1990); *Landesherrliche Kanzleien im Spätmittelalter*. Referate zum VI. Internationalen Kongreß für Diplomatik, ed. G. Silagi (Münchener Beiträge zur Mediävistik und Renaissanceforschung 35, Munich, 1983); *Écrit et pouvoir dans les chancelleries médiévales: espace français, espace anglais*, ed. K. Fianu and G. DeLloyd (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1997); R. H. Bautier, ‘Chancellerie et culture au Moyen Age,’ in *Cancellaria e cultura*, pp. 1–76, reprinted in his *Chartes, sceaux, et chancelleries*, 2 vols (Paris, 1990), vol. 1, pp. 47–121; R. W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1995–2001); E. Marmursztejn, *L’autorité des maîtres. Scolastique, normes, et société au XIII^e siècle* (Paris, 2007); *Suppliques et requêtes. Le gouvernement par la grâce de Dieu en Occident, XII^e–XV^e siècle*, ed. H. Millet (Rome, 2003); B. Guenée, ‘Chancelleries et monastères,’ in *Les lieux de la mémoire*, Vol. 2: *La nation*, ed. P. Nora (Paris, 1986), pp. 5–30. E. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies* (Princeton, 1957), pp. 87–97; M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, (Oxford, 2nd ed., 1993); E. E. Kittell, *From ad Hoc to Routine. A Case study in Medieval Bureaucracy* (Philadelphia, 1991); B. Grévin, *Rhétorique du pouvoir médiéval. Les lettres de Pierre La Vigne et la formation du langage politique européen* (Rome, 2008).

2 This paper is part of a work in progress in which I propose to analyse the changing perceptions

- and operations of seals in the central Middle Ages by considering their materiality, technicity, and discursive treatments.
- 3 Analyses of the treatment of seals in legal texts can be found in M. Welber, *I sigilli nella storia del diritto medievale italiano* (Milan, 1984: Sigillographia. Il sigillo nella diplomazia, nel diritto, nella storia, nell'arte 3), and B. M. Bedos-Rezak, 'The Efficacy of Signs and the Matter of Authenticity in Canon Law,' *Zwischen Pragmatik und Performanz: Dimensionen mittelalterlicher Schriftkultur*, ed. C. Dartmann, T. Scharff, and C. Weber (Turnhout, 2011: Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 18), pp. 199–236.
 - 4 M. Bellomo, *The Common Legal Past of Europe 1000–1800* (Washington D.C., 1995: Studies in Medieval And Early Modern Canon Law 4), p. 48.
 - 5 On Gratian's *Decretum*, see most recently A. Winroth, *The Making of Gratian's Decretum* (Cambridge, 2000). The most extensive discussion of the treatment of documents, and of documentary credibility in the *Decretum*, is by Welber, *I sigilli*, pp. 97–107, 165–7. The term *annulus* appears in the *Decretum's* passage devoted to matrimonial issues (see C. XXX, q. 5, c.3). This only mention of a seal (*annulus*) in connection with writing is found in the transcription of a *littera formata* sent in 1012 by Bishop Burchard of Worms to Walter, bishop of Spire (D.LXXII, c.1), whereby Burchard requests that Herman, who had been consecrated a priest by Burchard, be received by Walter in that quality. In the body of the letter, Burchard explains the purpose of the letter: *statutum est a sanctis Patribus, neminem clericum alienum et ignotum recipi ab aliquo episcopo, et inthronizari in sua ecclesia, nisi habeat a proprio episcopo epistolam, que in canonibus nominatur Formata. Ideo notum facimus fraternitati uestre, quod presens frater noster, harum litterarum portitor, nomine Hermannus ... Hanc ergo epistolam grecis litteris hinc inde munire decreuimus, et annulo nostre ecclesie firmare censuimus. Fraternitatem uestram Christus nobis incolumem conseruet. PI. GAMMA. ALPHA. PI. BETA. ETA. ZETA. AMEN. Data Vormacie Idibus Marcii, anno Dominicæ incarnationis MXII. Indictione X.* Despite the impression of a seal on Bouchard's letter, Gratian made no comment on the role of the seal and invests only the Greek letters with the ability to secure the genuineness and credibility of a *littera formata*. Bedos-Rezak, 'Efficacy of Signs,' pp. 204–05.
 - 6 C.XXV, Q.II, c.16: *Rescriptum meretur effectum, quod cum iuris et legum ratione concordat. Item Pelagius Papa Iobanni Comiti. Dicenti, sacras iussiones se habere pre manibus, respondimus scire illum oportere, quod ipse clementissimus princeps generalibus legibus constituerit, illa sacra uniuscuiusque supplicantis desiderio concessa preualere et effectui mancipari, que cum iuris et legum ratione concordant; ea uero, que subreptione uel falsis precibus forsitan inpetrantur, nullum remedium supplicantibus ferre. Gratianus: Rescripta, siue sint adnotationes sine pragmaticæ sanctiones, expressam debent habere in se condicionem: Si preces ueritate nituntur. Mendax enim precator debet carere inpetrat, et quibus scripta diriguntur sunt puniendi, si precum mendacia uetuerint argui. ... Welber, *I sigillo*, pp. 98–9; Bedos-Rezak, 'Efficacy of Signs,' pp. 206–07 and *passim* for an interpretative survey of the historiography and of Gratian's texts.*
 - 7 *Codicis titulo de diuersis rescriptis* Inpp. *Diocletianus et Maximianus*: §. 6. *Sanccimus, ut autentica ipsa atque originalia rescripta, etiam ex nostra manu subscripta, non exempla eorum insinuentur.* Such is the context in which the distinction between authentic and original, and copy was introduced in canon law. For a broader review of the question, see J. De Ghellinck, "Originale" et "Originalia", *Bulletin Du Cange* 14 (1939), 95–105. F. Millar, 'Emperors at Work,' *Journal of Roman Studies* 57 (1967), 9–19, at p. 13 discusses the passage of the Codex (*sanccimus*) cited by Gratian; Bedos-Rezak, 'Efficacy of Signs,' 209.
 - 8 *Dubitauimus hic sigillum plumbeum ponere, ne, si illud inimici caperent, de eo falsitatem aliquam facerent* (letter of 1082 to Robert Guiscard), *Monumenta Gregoriana*, ed. Jaffé (Berlin, 1865: *Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum* 2), p. 492; or: *Plumbeo sigillo idcirco signari litteras istas noluimus, ne, si forte caperentur ab impiis, eodem sigillo possit falsitatis quippiam fieri* (letter to Robert le Frison, count of Flanders, c. 1082), *Monumenta Gregoriana*, p. 568 and *Epistolae vagantes*, ed. and transl. H. E. J. Cowdrey (Oxford 1972), no. 45. The chronicler Hugh of Flavigny related an actual episode during which a papal bull was stolen by King Henry: *Rex uero hoste aduente, fugae praesidium requirens, sigillum domini papae, quem furto subripuerat, secum tulit; et Portuensem, quia olim familiaris papae fuerat, sibi conciliatum secum duxit. ... Quamobrem ueritas Matbildis, ne simplices quique astutia regis specie sigilli deciperentur, praeuenit malitiam illius, mittens litteras fidelibus in hec uerba: Matbildis Dei gratia si quid est, omnibus in Theuthonicorum regno commorantibus, salutem.*
Notum uobis facimus, quod Heinrichus falsus rex furto subripuit sigillum domini papae Gregorii. Unde si quid audieritis quod discordet a nostra legatione, falsum arbitramini, neque mendaciis eius adquiescatis. Preterea episcopum Portuensem secum ducit; quoniam olim fuit familiaris domini papae. Si igitur aliquid uobiscum uel contra uos per eum uult operari, eum falsum testem nolite dubitare. Nulli unquam credatis, qui aliter quam nos dicere audebit. Sciat domnum papam iam recuperasse Sutrium atque Nepe. Barrabas latro, id est Heinrichi papa, ipse quoque aufugit. Valete, et de insidiis Heinrichi

- cauti estote. Hugo abbas Flaviniacensis, Chronicon*, ed. G. H. Pertz (Hanover, 1848: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores* 8), p. 463.
- 9 In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the preferred term to designate the operation of sealing in the final clauses of charters was *impressio*, or *imago impressa*. During the entire initial century of their diffusion, seals were announced in the textual clauses of validation as impressions: *illi presenti privilegio firmari precepimus, quod subscriptione ac sigilli nostri impressione roboravi curavimus*, charter of Barthélémy de Joux, bishop of Laon, 1121, A. Dufour-Malbezin, *Actes des évêques de Laon des origines à 1151* (Paris, 2001), no. 92, p. 170. By the thirteenth century the diplomatic discourse of validation tended to include a generic formula which asserted that the seal was appended as an attestation. Compare this formula from the second half of the twelfth century: *Ut autem libertas eorum et consuetudines firmiter teneantur, ego Simon comes Ebrouicensis, presentibus filiis meis Amaurico et Simone et concedentibus, cartam meam eis [burgensibus Montecalvulo] dedi et sigilli mei impressione confirmavi* (A. Rhein, *La seigneurie de Monfort en Yveline* [Versailles, 1910: *Mémoires de la société archéologique de Rambouillet* XXI], no. v, p. 302), to the expression found almost systematically in charters from the mid-thirteenth century onward: *In cujus rei testimonium litteras sigilli nostri munimine fecimus roboravi* (charter of John, count of Montfort, for the nunnery of Saint-Antoine of Paris, 1248, Rhein, *La seigneurie de Monfort en Yveline*, no. liv, p. 336). Validating formulae in charters and their implications for the perception of seal agency are analysed in Bedos-Rezak, 'Replica: Images of Identity and the Identity of Images,' in *The Mind's Eye. Art and Theological Argument in the Medieval West*, eds J. Hamburger and A.-M. Bouché (Princeton, 2006), pp. 46–64, at pp. 51–4, and Bedos-Rezak, 'In search of a semiotic paradigm. The matter of sealing in medieval thought and praxis (1050–1400), in *Good Impressions. Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, eds N. Adams, J. Cherry and J. Robinson (London, 2008; British Museum, Occasional Paper series), pp. 1–7.
- 10 Bedos-Rezak, 'Efficacy of signs,' pp. 211–12, with specific examples and relevant bibliography. The role of kisses in medieval contracts is analysed by Y. Carré, *Le baiser sur la bouche au Moyen Age: rites, symboles, mentalités, à travers les textes et les images, XIe–XVe siècles* (Paris, 1992), pp. 157–60. On the inscription of crosses on documents, see the survey by M. Parrisé, 'Croix autographes de souscription dans l'Ouest de la France au XIe siècle,' in *Graphische Symbole in mittelalterliche Urkunden*, pp. 143–54; B. Fraenkel, *La signature. Genèse d'un signe* (Paris, 1992), pp. 63–5, 176–7 (Fr. *signer* and *se signer*, a parallelism not rendered in English: 'to sign' and 'to cross oneself'); B. Bedos-Rezak, 'Cutting Edge. The economy of mediality in twelfth-century chirographic writing,' in *Modelle des Medialen im Mittelalter*, ed. C. Kiening and M. Stercken, special issue of *Das Mittelalter* 15 (2010), pp. 134–61.
- 11 The most recent discussion of bodily marks on seals is Bedos-Rezak, 'In search of a semiotic paradigm,' with bibliography of earlier studies and excerpts from Thomas of Elmham's (d. 1420) chronicle of the monastery of St Augustine of Canterbury and from the 1444 cartulary of the Cluniac Priory of St Pancras of Lewes, which both contain descriptions of post-conquest charters sealed with wax imprinted with signs of the cross, bits of hair, or teeth-bites.
- 12 B. Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego was Imago. Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2010), analyses a substantial corpus of seal metaphors, of which one is given here (discussed in *When Ego* at pp. 149, 189): Gerhoh of Reichersberg (d. 1169), *Commentarius aureus in Psalmos*, xxx, commenting on the verse 'illustra faciem tuam super servum tuum': *Hanc faciem tuam illustra super me servum tuum, et super alium quemlibet servum tuum. Tu es quasi aurea substantia, et filius tuus cum sit splendor gloriae et figura substantiae tuae, tanquam regalis aut pontificalis imago in auro purissimo exhibet se ipsum pro incorruptibili sigillo cuilibet servo suo sibi conformando se imprimens. Tuque, Pater, hoc ipsum sigillationis opus per ipsum, et cum ipso, et in ipso perficis in servis tuis eidem filio configurandis, Patrologia Latina*, 193, col.1306D–1307A.
- 13 My translation. Peter the Chanter, *Verbum*, Ms Sainte-Geneviève, fol. 58v, cited in J. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants. The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and his Circle*, 2 vols (Princeton, 1970), vol. 1, p. 183. *Item episcopus justiciam suam venditare videtur vendendo imaginem suam per notarios qui vendunt scripturam calami et ganipulli, sigillum, pergamenum, ceram et huiusmodi. Hanc autem exactionem concedit eis episcopus nomine laboris et stipendii. Que omnia videntur facere simoniam vel notam symonie. Quid enim refert an vivam vocem, an scriptum quo loqui dicitur vendat episcopus?*
- 14 D. Pingree, 'The diffusion of Arabic magical texts in Western Europe,' in *La diffusione delle scienze islamiche nel Medio Evo europeo*, ed. B. Scarcia Amoretti. Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Roma, 2–4 October 1984; Rome 1987), pp. 57–102; N. Weill-Parot, *Les 'images astrologiques' au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance* (Paris, 2002), pp. 93–5.
- 15 The fundamental study of astral seals to date is by Weill-Parot, *Les 'images astrologiques'*, which he

- complemented with several articles: 'Causalité astrale et "science des images" au Moyen Age: Éléments de réflexion /Astral causality and the "science of images" during the Middle Ages: some lines of thought,' *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 52/2(1999), pp. 207–40; 'Astral magic and intellectual changes (twelfth–fifteenth centuries): "Astrological Images" and the concept of "Addressative" magic,' in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, eds J. N. Bremmer and J. R. Veenstra (eds), (Louvain, 2002), pp. 167–87; 'Astrology, astral influences, and occult properties in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', *Traditio* 65 (2010), pp. 201–30.
- 16 Monographs devoted to William of Auvergne do not abound, while most of his opus is available in seventeenth-century editions: N. Valois, *Guillaume d'Auvergne, évêque de Paris (1228–1249)* (Paris, 1880); *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne (†1249)*, ed. F. Morenzoni and J.-Y. Tilliette (Turnhout, 2005, Bibliothèque d'histoire culturelle du moyen âge, 2); R. J. Teske, *Studies in the Philosophy of William of Auvergne, Bishop of Paris (1228–1249)* (Milwaukee, WI, 2006); a short but up-to-date survey of William's life and works is by R. J. Teske, *Universe of Creatures* (Milwaukee, WI, 1998), pp. 13–17. The seal of Bishop William is still extant, bearing the traditional effigy of a bishop in vestments, L. Douët d'Arcq, *Collections de sceaux*, 3 vols (Paris, 1863–1868), vol. 2, no. 6788, p. 534.
 - 17 William knew the *Liber Almandal*, the *De Quatuor Annulis* (which William cited as the *Idea Salomonis*), the *Liber sacratus*, and the *Opus novem candaritarum*, L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, v.2 (New York, 1923), pp. 280–3; B. Grévin and J. Véronèse, 'Les "caractères" magiques au Moyen Âge (XIIe–XIVe siècle)', *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, 162 (2004), 305–79, at pp. 323, 326–7, 334.
 - 18 B. Delaurenti, *La puissance des mots. "Virtus Verborum." Débats doctrinaux sur le pouvoir des incantations au Moyen Age* (Paris, 2008), p. 108: the notion of a *nigromancia secundum physicam* had been introduced c. 1160 by Dominic Gundissalinus.
 - 19 Both *De Legibus* and *De Universo* have been consulted in *Guilielmi Alverni Opera Omnia Tomis Duobus Contenta, Tomus Primus* (Paris-Orléans, 1674).
 - 20 William of Auvergne's attitudes toward natural magic have recently received a fair amount of attention: N. Weill-Parot, *Images astrologiques*, pp. 176–7; Delaurenti, *La puissance des mots*, p. 108–11, 202–30; J.-P. Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance. Astrologie, divination et magie dans l'Occident médiéval, XIIe–XVe siècle* (Paris, 2006), pp. 128, 216–17.
 - 21 See, for instance, *De Legibus*, chap. 27, p. 87, where William describes the various virtues attributed to sapphire as being natural and celestial, and describes those who believe that, through consecrations, statues could like stones, acquire divine power, and become operative.
 - 22 *De Legibus*, chapter 20, p. 55: *Jam alibi didicisti, quia corporales virtutes non agunt, nisi per contactum agentis et patientis, aut medii, quod necesse est, ut si contingens ad utrumque, et deferens passionem ab latero in alterum, De Universo*, I, 1, 46: *...imagines magicæ non operantur per intelligentiam aut voluntatem cum neutrum habeant; sed neque per virtutem corporalem ad modum naturæ; operationes enim corporales per modum naturæ per contactum sunt aut mediatum, aut immediatum, quod est dicere, quia corpus virtute sua corporali non agit, nisi vel in corpus, quod contingit, vel in aliud contingens illud*. S. P. Marrone, 'Magic and the physical world in thirteenth-century scholasticism', *Early Science and Medicine* 14/ 1–3 (2009), pp. 158–85. One other context in which William discussed natural operations involved the relationship of the soul to the body, De Laurenti, *Puissance des mots*, pp. 126–9; Teske, 'William of Auvergne's spiritualist concept of the human being,' in *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, pp. 35–53.
 - 23 *De Universo*, I, 1, 21, p. 616; trans. Teske, *Universe of Creatures*, p. 77. This passage deserves additional analysis and will be further addressed in my larger study of thirteenth-century perceptions of seals; see above at n. 2.
 - 24 William's dependency upon similes and metaphors derived from his daily life and environment has been noted, Valois, *Guillaume d'Auvergne*, p. 216; J. Le Goff, 'An urban metaphor of William of Auvergne', in *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago, 1992), pp. 177–80, 267–8.
 - 25 *De Legibus*, cap. 27, p. 87; see above at note 21.
 - 26 My translation. *De Legibus*, cap. 27, p. 87: *Si enim formæ ceræ, quæ utique similitudinem habent agnorum, hanc virtutem accipiunt per benedictionem Romani Pontificis, ut fulgura arceant. ... Sicut ergo regale sigillum, seu aliud quodcunque signum ducatus tuetur deferentes, et securos efficit, ne eis noceatur ab his qui regi subsunt, et hoc non sua virtute, sed potestate regia et voluntate; similiter hujusmodi res vel signa non ex virtute aliqua, quæ ex eis sit, sed omnipotentis virtute et beneplacito creatoris ...* Weill-Parot, *Images astrologiques*, pp. 201–04, where the author gives an analysis of William's use of the royal seal image throughout his writings.
 - 27 P. D. A. Harvey and A. McGuiness mention the case of a seal placed upon the tower of an abbey to ward off lightning, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (London, 1996), p. 2.
 - 28 Augustine himself had, in *De Doctrina Christiana*,

- II, 20 (30) implied that his concept of *signa naturalia* would legitimate the efficacy of amulets; text cited in French translation in Delaurenti, *La puissance des mots*, p. 214.
- 29 The will and intention of illegitimate individuals result only in execrable incantations, which fail to endow images with any efficacy. William's argument is weak, resting upon an arbitrary definition of authorised and non-authorised powers.
- 30 *De Legibus*, cap. 27, p. 87: *operatio intellectivae virtutis nec in corpora est, nec per corpus, sicut alibi didicisti ... manifestum est tibi, quia nec metallum, nec aes, nec lignum, nec lutum receptibile est intellectus, aut scientiae ullo modorum....* Although these considerations immediately follow William's discussion of the royal seal, they concern sculpted statues and do not include wax among the materials incapable of animation. However, later in the same chapter, William includes wax and imprints to denounce the stupidity of those who think that such images could have the divine capacity of working wonders, either because of their iconography or by means of their material, *ibid.*, p. 88.
- 31 *De Legibus*, cap. 27, p. 88.
- 32 *De Doctrina Christiana*, Book II, chaps 1–3; later in Book II, at chap. 24, Augustine condemns astrologers and the arts of divination, using the theory of signs he had elaborated in chapters 1–3. He insists that astrology and divination are the work of the Devil, with whom human beings communicate by language. However, Augustine states, *Classics Ethereal Library (CCEL)*, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/doctrine.xxv_1.html: 'the same figure of the letter X, which is made in the shape of a cross, means one thing among the Greeks and another among the Latins, not by nature, but by agreement and prearrangement as to its signification; ... men did not agree upon them as signs because they were already significant, but on the contrary they are now significant because men have agreed upon them; in the same way also, those signs by which the ruinous intercourse with devils is maintained have meaning just in proportion to each man's observations'. According to Augustine, signs have no intrinsic significance; interactions with demons result only from an agreement with them, which could be avoided by avoiding communicating with them. Robert A. Markus, 'Augustine on Magic: A neglected semiotic theory,' *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 40 (1994), 375–88, reprinted in Markus, *Signs and Meaning. World and Text in Ancient Christianity* (1996), c. 5; F. Graf, 'Augustine and Magic,' in *The Metamorphosis of Magic*, pp. 87–103.
- 33 My translation. William of Auvergne, *De legibus*, cap. 27, p. 89: *Exempla operationum, quae per signa videntur fieri, manifesta sunt in regibus, et subditis eorum, inter quos discurrent litere regie cum impressione anuli, vel imaginis sue, quibus credunt et obediunt subditi, velut ex pacto obedientie, quae regibus suis tenentur, et ipsi reges, velut ex pacto quo tenentur veritati, et justitiae debent absque falsitate per huiusmodi signa suam exprimere voluntatem ... Similia signa currunt inter amicos, similiter inter personas publicas, et universas, et huiusmodi signis se consueverunt obligare homines invicem: ... Fiunt signa pactorum, et quorumlibet contractuum, quae vulgariter dicitur chirographia...*; Grévin et Véronèse, 'Les "caractères magiques" au Moyen Âge', pp. 305–79, at p. 359.
- 34 William's discussion of sacraments and magical signs is magisterially analysed by Irene Rosier-Catach, 'Signes sacramentels et signes magiques: Guillaume d'Auvergne et la théorie du pacte', in *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, pp. 93–116.
- 35 William of Auvergne, *De Universo*, I, i, cap. 46; Weill-Parot, *Image astrologiques*, p. 203. *Siquidem quia tam virtuosarum imaginum imagines sunt, tunc imago regis alicujus ex necessitate posset in toto regno ipsius et obediens ei in regno illo quicquid obedit regi, et ad hunc modum de unoquoque principe et duce contra quod non oportet aliquem disputare*
- 36 My translation, William of Auvergne, *De Universo*, I, i, cap. 46, p. 662: *Sub quantacunque enim veneratione regis fiat ejus imago, non propter hoc obediens ei totum regnum illius. ... Similiter quantuncumque bene, prospere et foeliciter se habente rege facta fuerit imago ejus, non propter hoc aliquid potentiae vel virtutis acquireretur imagini illi.*
- 37 In his condemnation of imprinted images, William went so far as to reject bodily stigmata, at a time when Francis was experiencing this form of encounter with the supernatural, *De Legibus*, cap. 27, p. 89–90.
- 38 Bedos-Rezak, 'Efficacy of signs,' pp. 216–33
- 39 *Tota credulitas litere [dimissorie] dependet in sigillo autentico, bene cognito et famoso ... Et ecce persone sunt, ut episcopi et eorum pares vel superiores, quorum sigilla in foro contentioso autentica reputantur. Quae autem sigilla—episcopis et eorum paribus et superioribus exceptis—in foro contentioso secundum jus scriptum seu consuetudinem terre approbatam autentica reputantur vel debeant reputari, non expedit explicare in presentis operis parvitate, qui glossatores juris canonici et civiles in hoc casu dissimilia dicere videntur et diversa*, K. von Mure, *Summa de arte prosandi*, ed. L. Rockinger, *Briefsteller und Formelbücher des elften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols (New York, 1961: *Burt Franklin research and source works* 10), vol. 1, pp. 459, 475.
- 40 In a section labeled *quod litera et sigillum debent se conformare*.
- 41 Horace, *Ars Poetica*: *velut aegri somnia, vanae finguntur species, ut nec pes nec caput uni reddatur formae*, 'like the dreams of a sick

- person, senseless images are fashioned in such a way that neither head nor foot can be formed into a single shape’.
- 42 My translation. K. von Mure, *Summa de arte prosandi*, ed. L. Rockinger, vol. 1, p. 474. *Quomodo requiretur de perfectione seu de modo perfectionis literarum. Sicut enim hominem duo perficiunt: corpus et anima, sic et literarum duo perficiunt: virtus verborum que se habet ad modum anime, et sigillum quod se habet ad modum corporis. Unde expedit, ut verba salutationis et epistole sigillo se conforment. ... Unde caveri debet, ne in salutatione titulus mittentis discrepet a sigillo, id est ab ymagine et a literis quas habet circumferentia sigilli. Si enim aliquis in salutatione se ipsum appellaret episcopum vel abbatem, et sigillum sub imagine militis armati vel sub ymagine leonis eundem appellaret comitem, or e contrario, hoc esset absonum penitus et absurdum. Unde philosophus: ‘sic nec pes nec caput uni reddantur forme’ ... [Famosi principes] semper enim sua sigilla propter ardua negocia expedienda a latere suo sub magna custodia et fidei debent habere. Et nulle litere nisi valde simplices debent domini sigillo communiri nisi de scitu principis speciali, et post legitimam literarum examinationem factam a prothonotario seu cancellario vel aliis qui ad hujusmodi officium sunt per principem deputati.*
- 43 My translation. *ibid.*, p. 476. *Item sicut tignum dimittentem format tigillum, sic signum format sigillum. Et signum est quod se offert sensui et aliud reliquit intellectui, sicut circulus dependens ante tabernam signat vinum esse venalem in taberna.*
- 44 I. Rosier-Catache, *La parole efficace* (Paris, 2004), pp. 28, 43, 57, 64, 65, 72–3, 81; ed. J. Hackett, *Roger Bacon and the Sciences. Commemorative Essays* (Chicago, 1997).
- 45 P. D. A. Harvey, ‘Personal Seals in Thirteenth-Century England’, in *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to John Taylor*, eds I. Wood and G. A. Loud (London, 1991), pp. 117–27; A. F. McGuinness, ‘Non-Armigerous Seals and Seal-Usage in Thirteenth-Century England’, *Thirteenth Century England*, vol. 5 (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 165–77; Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide to British Medieval Seals*, pp. 79–93.
- 46 R.-H. Bautier, ‘L’authentification des actes privés dans la France médiévale: notariat public et juridiction gracieuse,’ *Notariado público y documento privado, de los orígenes al siglo XIV* (Valencia, 1989), t. II, pp. 701–72; Bautier, ‘Origine et diffusion du sceau de juridiction’, *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. Comptes-rendus des séances*, 1971, pp. 304–21; both essays have been reprinted in Bautier, *Chartes, sceaux, et chancelleries*, vol. 1, pp. 269–340 and 341–58.
- 47 S. Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King. A Prehistory of Portraiture in late Medieval France* (Chicago, 2009); G. Brunel, *Images du pouvoir royal. Les chartes décorées des Archives nationales, XIIIe–XVe siècles* (Paris, 2005). Bedos-Rezak, ‘Image as Patron. Convention and Invention in Fourteenth-century France’, in *Patrons and Professionals in the Middle Ages*, eds P. Binski and E. A. New, Harlaxton Medieval Studies, XXII (Donington, 2012.), pp. 216–36.

Governmental seals of Richard I

Adrian Ailes

Richard I used a variety of seals – a personal seal, two great seals, and at least one Exchequer seal.¹ Their stories involve mystery, forgery, a drowning at sea, religious iconography, heraldic innovation and controversy, a Roman god, a loss for over eight centuries, kidnap and ransom, and, as with so much to do with the Lionheart, financial extortion. Contemporary chroniclers and modern-day historians have all pondered over the reasons behind the adoption, design, ownership, and vicissitudes of Richard's seals – usually to little agreement. This paper revisits Richard's change of first great seal providing a more definite date for his second great seal, and highlights a newly discovered seal belonging to his beleaguered home government.

Signet

Richard must have used a private seal or signet to close and validate his private correspondence. We know that shortly before he became king he sent out over 200 letters in one night. It is highly unlikely that he issued all these under his large equestrian seal as duke of Aquitaine.² Both his brothers, Henry the Young King, and John as lord of Ireland and count of Mortain, used a signet or 'secret' seal. According to the contemporary author Gerald of Wales, Richard's father, Henry II, when dying gave Richard's illegitimate half-brother, Geoffrey, his best gold ring which he valued highly and which depicted a panther; this may well have

been the old king's signet.³ As for Richard, a gold and glass gem intaglio now in the British Museum may have been his private seal. The Classical gem dates to about AD 400 and depicts the figure of Mercury. It is surrounded by the legend 'S' for SIGILLUM, followed by the name 'RICHARD', and then a word beginning with the letters 'RE...' perhaps for 'REX' or 'REG', and finally an abbreviated word beginning with the letter 'P...' possibly for 'PRIVATUM'. Unfortunately, the legend has been systematically defaced, and we cannot be sure of the provenance and ownership of this charming object.⁴

Great seals

We can be certain that Richard used in turn two great seals as king; the first from early September 1189 to at least early January (possibly April) 1198, and the second from mid-May 1198 at the latest to his death on 6 April 1199.⁵ Controversy has surrounded the heraldry of the first and the date of the second. The heraldry of the first great seal is noteworthy since it provides the first direct evidence of the design of arms borne by a king of England. Richard is portrayed on the reverse riding to the right (Fig. 7.1). He brandishes a sword and carries a large shield with central boss. The problem here is that his shield is shown in strict profile with a single lion rampant squeezed into the visible half and facing to the right, that is towards the centre of

Fig. 7.1 First great seal of Richard I, 1189–98 a) obverse; b) reverse. (Durham Cathedral Muniments, *Medieval Seal G&B* 3022. Reproduced by permission of Durham University Library and the Dean and Chapter of Durham).



a



b

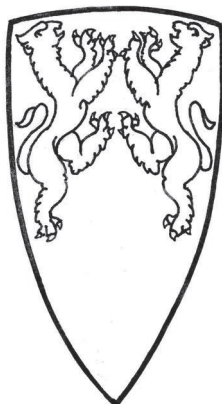


Fig. 7.2. (above) Arms once thought to have been used by Richard I, 1189–98 (A. Ailes).

the shield. Since the lion is shown whole, it was for many years thought that there must be a second similar lion on the hidden side likewise facing towards the centre, thus producing the heraldic arms, two lions facing each other or ‘combatant’ (Fig. 7.2). This would also explain why the visible lion is facing to the viewer’s right (sinister for the shield bearer) whereas lions in heraldry normally face to the left (dexter).

Moreover, according to the contemporary crusading chronicle, the *Itinerary of King Richard*, the king’s saddle bore two lions (this time probably passant) facing each other as if to fight.⁶ However, it has now been shown that other contemporary seals depicting identical lion-shields in strict profile belonged to men who definitely bore a *single* lion rampant for their arms, in particular the influential equestrian seal dating to about 1170 of that great patron of chivalry, Philip d’Alsace

count of Flanders. This is corroborated by contemporary manuscript illumination, and chronicle evidence talks of Richard’s banner whilst he was on crusade as charged with a lion (singular).⁷

Richard’s second great seal (Fig. 7.3) is also heraldically important, since it bore a totally new shield design: three lions passant guardant, still today the royal arms of England (Fig. 7.4). It also bore an early example of an heraldic fan-crest again depicting a lion. Unlike the heraldry of the first great seal none of this is in dispute. What is fiercely debated is the seal’s date, however, and to understand why, one has first to examine the trials and tribulations of its predecessor, Richard’s first great seal.

Richard’s first great seal was probably made in France in August 1189 shortly after his accession. It is far more naturalistic in design than that of the late king. As was usual, Richard would have entrusted it to the custody of his

Fig. 7.3. Second great seal of Richard I, 1198–99: a) obverse; b) reverse (The National Archives DL 10/47. By permission of the Duchy of Lancaster. Duchy of Lancaster copyright material in The National Archives is reproduced by permission of the Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster).



a



b



chancellor, William Longchamp.⁸ The new great seal was put into use almost immediately after Richard's coronation, which took place on 3 September.⁹ From December 1189 to March 1190 Richard was in France, with Longchamp at home looking after the kingdom. The great seal, which had to be kept in close attendance upon the king at all times, was, therefore, entrusted to John de Alençon, archdeacon of Lisieux, as seal bearer and vice-chancellor.¹⁰ In March Richard left for the Holy Land and henceforth the great seal was carried further afield by Roger Malcael, the king's seal-bearer. In April 1191 disaster struck when he was drowned off Cyprus. Roger's body along with the seal were washed ashore and the seal quickly returned to the king.¹¹ After this it continued with Richard on his crusade.

On the king's return journey from the Holy Land disaster struck again. In December 1192 Richard was taken captive in Austria by duke Leopold V and handed over to the emperor, Henry VI. The seal was almost certainly with him at the time and was now in enemy hands. In England Richard's brother, Count John, may have taken the opportunity to circulate a false (*sophisticatum*) great seal possibly in February or March 1193.¹² Longchamp was again with Richard in Worms in late June. This resulted in Longchamp's resumption of activities and his renewed use of the great seal in August of that year whilst both he and the king were abroad; he was still using it in Brussels in late February 1194.¹³ On 13 March Richard returned (with his seal) to these shores. After his so-called second 'coronation' (it was probably more a glorified crown-wearing ceremony) Richard left England on 12 May 1194, never to set foot in his kingdom again. He took with him his first great seal which we know he was still using on 7 January 1198 but not after 16 May of that year by which time he was using his second great seal.¹⁴

According to Roger of Howden, a royal clerk who accompanied Richard on crusade, it was during the king's brief stay in England in 1194 that he first ordered that all charters and confirmations under the old seal were to be renewed under a new great seal.¹⁵ Howden claimed that the change of seal was due both to its temporary loss in the shipwreck off the coast of Cyprus in April 1191 when Malcael was drowned, and also to Longchamp's mishandling of the Truce of Tillières in July 1194, when Richard was so irritated by his chancellor's handling of the negotiations that he took the same seal from him. The text of charters subsequently renewed under the second great seal at the end of the reign (which Howden, of course, may have seen before writing up his account of 1194) likewise claimed that the new seal had been introduced because of the temporary loss of the first great seal, but added the further reason that it had also fallen into enemy hands (in 1192–93), during the time when Richard was held hostage.¹⁶

None of this, however, explains why it was not until sometime between early January and mid-May 1198 that the second great seal was first put into use. Lionel Landon, who in the 1930s constructed a detailed itinerary of the Lionheart, suggested that this substantial delay was to avoid the inevitable outcry by those having to pay for the renewing of their charters initially issued under the former seal.¹⁷ In the process Landon revised Howden's initial date for the change of seal from 1194 to mid-1195. He did so on the basis of two references taken from the annual accounts of the Exchequer. The first, in the pipe roll for 1195, states that the goldsmith, William, 'who made the seal of the king [*sigillum regis*]', was paid two marks to buy a robe and for the payment of his hire.¹⁸ The second, found in the chancellor's roll for 1196, records that plate worth 5 marks was to be paid by order of a writ of Hubert Walter archbishop of Canterbury for the making of a new royal seal: *ad sigillum R[egis] novum faciendum*.¹⁹ This actually occurs in an account of payments made between 21 May 1195 and 6 July 1197 which was added to the roll after the account for the year to Michaelmas 1196 had been presented to the Exchequer. Since Landon believed both references were to the same seal, namely Richard's second great seal, he concluded that its production must have been between 21 May 1195, the earliest date

Fig. 7.4. Arms from the second great seal of Richard I, 1198–99 (A. Ailes).

Fig. 7.5. Counterseal of William Longchamp, bishop of Ely, 1191 (The National Archives, DL 27/3. By permission of the Duchy of Lancaster. Copyright material in The National Archives is reproduced by permission of the Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster).



given in the chancellor's roll, and Michaelmas 1195, the accounting date, and, therefore, the last date, of the pipe roll.

There are, however, serious problems with both Howden's and Landon's datings. Howden may well have been in error to suggest 1194 since, when he refers to the edict again in 1198, he fails to refer to his earlier statement.²⁰ Maybe the idea of changing the seal had been mooted in 1194 but not enacted until 4 years later. 1198 is the date given by other chroniclers and the date when we know the second great seal was first used. The eminent Victorian genealogist and historian, J. H. Round, for one, was convinced that Howden's earlier statement should be totally rejected.²¹ Landon's dating too is suspect. Indeed, he admits that the first payment does not explicitly state that it was for making a new great seal – it might have been for something else and simply paid to William, a goldsmith who at some point in the past had made a royal seal. If then this was the case it allows us to accept the dates in the account

of payments later added to the chancellor's roll, namely, 21 May 1195 to 6 July 1197. This would allow us to bring forward Landon's date of mid-1195 for the production of the second great seal by approximately 2 years, to July 1197.

Moreover, and Landon had not realised this, the pipe roll and the chancellor's roll refer only to a *sigillum regis* and we know from the *Dialogus de Scaccario*, written in the late 1170s, that the Exchequer seal was also known as the *sigillum regis*.²² Could it be that the *sigillum regis* referred to in 1195, and again possibly as late as mid-1197, is not the second great seal at all, but a new Exchequer seal? If so, this would permit us to date Richard's second great seal to even later, such as late 1197, or more probably between mid-January (the first great seal was still in use on 7 January) and 16 May 1198, by which time the second great seal had been produced. Above all, late 1197/early 1198, provided the perfect opportunity for Richard's new keeper of the great seal, Eustace, later chancellor, to raise extra cash not only for the king but also for himself, since, as already noted, the Chancery could exact substantially higher fees for the resealing.²³ 1198 would also tie in with Howden's second statement, the testimony of other contemporary chroniclers, and, of course, the introduction of the second great seal.

There may well be further, if less substantial, reasons for favouring late 1197 or early 1198 for the production of the second great seal. After Longchamp's death in late January 1197 Richard may have been keen to exorcise from his great seal the device of the star and crescent. This was a religious symbol later adopted by his brother, John, on his Irish coinage, by John's son Henry III on his great seal, and as far afield as Hungary by Andrew II on his famous Golden Bull of 1222.²⁴ The problem arose because in the 1190s this device was being prominently and widely used by the haughty William Longchamp as chancellor on his own personal seal, which he often used instead of the royal great seal (Fig. 7.5). A single sun and single moon as portrayed on Richard's new second great seal may well have been seen as less offensive, bearing in mind Longchamp's unpopularity.²⁵ Suns and moons decorated Richard's cloak when he was in Cyprus, and his ally and nephew, Otto IV, bore a sun and moon on his seal of majesty as emperor.²⁶

A new great seal for Richard would also have afforded the king the opportunity to display

(perhaps for the first time) his distinctive new heraldic arms, *three lions passant guardant*. The design of this shield may well have been a bold visual statement that he was still master of the kingdom he had inherited from his father, since it clearly reflected the *two* lions passant coat that Henry II had almost certainly borne. Assuming this was the case, Richard would have needed to add the third lion to distance himself from his brother Count John, and certain of his rebel brother's allies who rather inconveniently also bore two lions passant or passant guardant on their shields. Interestingly, in 1199 John dropped his two-lion coat as depicted on his seal as lord of Ireland and, like Richard, depicted the distinctive new design of three lions on his new seal as king, probably for much the same reason, namely to demonstrate that he too had fully and rightly succeeded to his predecessor's throne.²⁷

Exchequer seal

All this throws a sharp spotlight on that other, shadowy seal of King Richard's reign: the Exchequer seal. This was used not only as a substitute royal seal for business purposes in the Exchequer but also performed the tasks of the great seal proper when (at least from the reign of Richard I) this was abroad with the king. We know from the *Dialogus de Scaccario* that Henry II had used such a seal and that, unlike the itinerant great seal of the king's court, it was held in the treasury along with Domesday Book. Here it was kept in the custody of the chancellor, though he discharged its safe keeping to a deputy. The *Dialogus* also informs us that this Exchequer seal bore the same image and legend as the royal seal so that it would carry the same authority.²⁸ Thus, it would have borne the king in majesty on the obverse and in full armour on horseback on the reverse. Contemporary chroniclers add that it was not as large as the great seal, referring to it as the small(er) (*parvum*) seal.²⁹ A charter dated 18 January 1190 at Westminster makes reference to a second charter but that one issued with the *magno sigillo* implying that the January 1190 charter itself had been sealed with a smaller seal, which we can presume to be that of the Exchequer.³⁰

Size matters since a now lost seal appended to a charter issued by the chancellor, William Longchamp, at Winchester on Low Sunday,

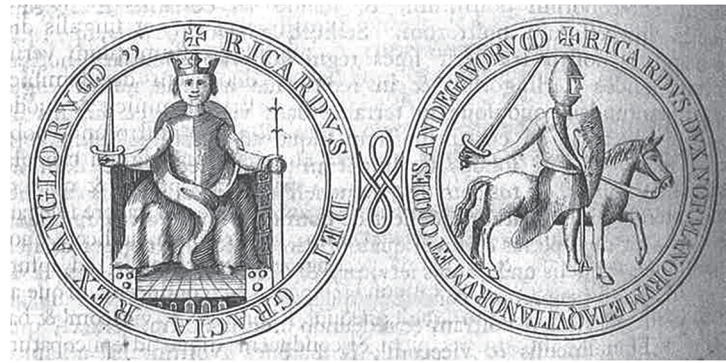


Fig.7.6. Engraving of Richard I's ?Exchequer seal (1194) by Benjamin Pouncy (1774).

17 April 1194, the day of Richard's second 'coronation' in that ancient capital, was described by the antiquary Joseph Ayloffe in the 1770s as being unique in that it was smaller and red. The author, presumably unaware of the Exchequer seal, thought it to be a privy seal; the fact that it was red we now know to be insignificant.³¹ A rather naïve engraving of this lost seal by Benjamin Pouncy accompanies Ayloffe's transcript of the charter (Fig. 7.6). It looks remarkably similar to Richard's first great seal (as, indeed, contemporaries tell us the Exchequer seal was) except that the star and crescent and the elaborate curved spray of foliage, are missing from either side of the enthroned king. This omission may have been due to damage to the seal or a poor impression.³² The checky pattern of the floor and roundels might represent the checkered board and counters of the Exchequer.³³

In 1935 Landon stated that there were no impressions left of the Exchequer seal, considering it to be a particularly sad loss since otherwise the first known impression of such a seal dates to as late as Edward I.³⁴ However, Mason and Bray's 1988 catalogue of charters at Westminster Abbey records that the seal attached to a writ dated 26 January [1190] and issued at Westminster under the hand of Longchamp whilst the king was out of the country may have been the Exchequer seal of Richard I.³⁵ This is indeed the case.

The seal is uncoloured and smaller than the great seal (Fig. 7.7). Unfortunately, only a central pitted fragment remains but enough to distinguish it in design from its contemporary, Richard's first great seal. It depicts on the obverse the king in majesty seated on a throne and wearing a tight-fitting tunic. It appears from the fragment that a mantle is draped over his right shoulder and runs across the front of

Fig. 7.7. Exchequer seal of Richard I, 1190 (Westminster Abbey Muniments, XLVII. By permission of Dean and Chapter of Westminster).



the king's body; this is similar to the second great seal of his father, but unlike either of Richard's great seals. In his right hand Richard holds a sword; no details remain of what he holds in his left hand – presumably it was an orb. A plant spray, similar to those on the first great seal, survive in the field of the seal. A star and crescent may have appeared over the king's shoulders – we cannot tell because of damage to the seal – but, if they did they would have been much smaller and less prominent than on the first great seal; hence, perhaps their omission from Pouncey's engraving. The throne is different from those depicted in Richard's two great seals. As in Pouncey's illustration the arms on each side of the throne come straight up and do not splay out at the top. There is also a distinctive saltire-like design on the back panelling of the throne.

What remains of the reverse of the seal – the equestrian side – again appears similar though not identical to that of the first great seal. Frustratingly the shield design is almost illegible, though very faint traces suggest a lion rampant to the sinister. If this is the case, and if Pouncey's drawing is of the Exchequer seal, then the shield repeated Richard's single-lion device. The main difference between the design of the reverse of Richard's Exchequer seal and that of his first great seal is the lack of long flowing hauberk extending from beneath the king's outer coat of mail; again this is reminiscent of the second great seal of Henry II. Also Richard's visible (right) foot protrudes beyond the front of the horse's right

leg. The horse's left front leg just touches a very faint edge of the legend border affording us an approximate measurement of the seal's total diameter of about 88 mm. This compares with about 98 mm for the king's first great seal thus making it about 10% smaller.

The Exchequer seal was kept in England whilst Richard was on crusade; here it acted in the same manner as the seal of absence which first appeared during the reign of Henry III.³⁶ Howden tells us that before he left for Calais on 12 December 1189 Richard gave Longchamp 'one' of his seals by virtue of which he ordered his commands to be carried out in the kingdom whilst he was away; clearly then, there must have been at least one other royal seal which would have been Richard's great seal kept with him during his time abroad.³⁷ The contemporary chronicler Gervase of Canterbury adds that the seal left with Longchamp was the 'small seal' (*sigillum parvum*) engraved with the king in majesty.³⁸ This must have been the Exchequer seal which Longchamp continued to use in England until the following March when he returned to Normandy.³⁹ This covers the date of the only known extant example of the seal. It also covers the date of the charter of 18 January 1190 which, as we have noted, carried a smaller seal (such as the Exchequer seal) than a previous charter of 5 December 1189.⁴⁰

From April 1190 to October 1191, when the high-handed Longchamp was deposed, there is, to quote Landon, no record of the use in England of a royal seal for purposes other than those of the Exchequer. In October

1191 Longchamp was forced to give up his functions and surrendered the Exchequer seal to the new chief justiciar, Walter of Coutances, archbishop of Rouen. Henceforth, it was placed in the keeping of master Benedict, John's *sigillarius* at the time, and put into immediate use.⁴¹ Coutances, however, abandoned Longchamp's imperious ways for a more collegial style of governance preferring to use the Exchequer seal for royal business unlike his predecessor who, as previously noted, preferred to use his own personal seal.⁴² Beyond this we have no further information regarding Richard's Exchequer seal until, perhaps, further impressions come to light.

Conclusion

We can now bring forward the date of Richard I's second great seal from 1194/1195 to July 1197 and there is good reason to believe that it was actually produced sometime between late 1197/early 1198 and mid-May 1198. It may have been introduced at the behest of the king's new keeper of the great seal, Eustace, to exact fees, and this extortion duly occurred in 1198. A change of seal design also allowed the king to display his new arms, three lions passant guardant, and thus link himself more closely with the kingdom he had inherited from his father who had almost certainly borne very similar arms: two lions passant possibly also guardant. It also permitted Richard to drop the star and crescent device as depicted on his first great seal, since this had featured so prominently on the personal seal of William Longchamp, which the hated chancellor had widely used in the royal service. Moreover, we can now be certain that Richard's Exchequer seal was, as contemporaries claimed, smaller than and virtually identical in design to the king's first great seal. Whether, for much the same reasons as already noted, Richard also produced a second Exchequer seal, possibly the *sigillum regis* referred to in 1195 and in mid-1197, remains to be discovered.

Notes

1 I am most grateful to Professor Brian Kemp and Dr Nicholas Karn for reading a draft of this paper and making many useful suggestions, and to Dr Richard Mortimer and Matthew Payne, Keepers of the Muniments at Westminster Abbey, for their kind assistance with regard to Richard's Exchequer seal.

- 2 *History of William Marshal*, ed. A. J. Holden, trans. S. Gregory, notes by D. Crouch, 3 vols (London, 2002), ll. 8247–49; seal in use since at least c. 1174: F. Eygun, *Sigillographie du Poitou* (Poitiers, 1938), p. 54 and no. 6; R. J. Smith, 'Henry II's Heir: the *Acta* and Seal of Henry the Young King, 1170–83', *English Historical Review* 116 (2001), 297–326 at p. 307.
- 3 For John's privy seal: The National Archives [hereafter TNA] C 109/86/4, DL 10/33; W. de G. Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 6 vols (London, 1887–1900), no. 6323; A. Ailes, 'The Seal of John, Lord of Ireland and Count of Mortain', *Coat of Arms*, new series 4 (1981), 341–50; and T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England: The Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seals*, vol. 1 (Manchester, 1920), pp. 153–7. For the signet of Henry the Young King see 'The Metrical Chronicle of Jordan Fantosme' in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. R. Howlett, 4 vols (Rolls Series, 1884–89), vol. 3, pp. 202–377, at 224, line 246). For Henry II's signet see '*De Vita Galfridi Archiepiscopi Ebor'* in Gerald of Wales, *Opera*, ed. J. S. Brewer, J. F. Dimock, and G. F. Warner, 8 vols (Rolls Series, 1861–91), vol. 4, p. 371; passage quoted in full and discussed in H. Stanford London, *Royal Beasts* (East Knoyle, 1956), p. 9 n. 3. For the panther see J.-M. Pastre, 'Histoire, Héraldique et Litterature: Le Léopard au Cimier dans le *Reinhart Fuchs*' in *Actes du Colloque du Centre d'Études Médiévales de l'Université de Picardie* (Amiens 20–24 mars 1985), ed. D. Buschinger (Göppingen, 1991), pp. 367–79 at p. 370; and R. Barber, *Bestiary: Being an English Version of the Bodleian Library, Oxford MS Bodley 764 with all the Original Miniatures Reproduced in Facsimile* (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 30–3.
- 4 *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, eds N. Adams, J. Cherry and J. Robinson (London, 2008), p. 116; P. Lasko, 'The Signet Ring of King Richard I of England', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2 (1960–64), 333–5; J. Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven and London, 1999), pl. 3.
- 5 Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, nos 80, 87. See also *English Romanesque Art: 1066–1200*, ed. G. Zarnecki (London, 1984), p. 304 for Richard's first great seal.
- 6 '*Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*' [hereafter 'Itinerary of King Richard'], in *Chronicles and Memorials of the Reign of Richard I*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (Rolls Series, 1864–65), vol. 1, p. 197; *A Translation of the 'Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi'*, ed. H. J. Nicholson (Aldershot, 1997), p. 190. Comparison with other decorated saddles of the time, and the

- fact that the lions are very probably passant and not rampant, means we should not place too much significance on the evidence of Richard's saddle (A. Ailes, *The Origins of the Royal Arms of England: Their Development to 1199* (Reading, 1982), pp. 69–71).
- 7 G. Demay, *Inventaire des sceaux de la Flandre*, 2 vols (Paris, 1873), no. 138; *The History of the Holy War: Ambroise's 'Estoire de la Guerre Sainte'*, ed. M. Ailes and M. Barber (Woodbridge, 2003), l. 11496; 'Itinerary of King Richard', ed. Stubbs, vol. 1, p. 418; *Translation of the 'Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi'*, ed. Nicholson, p. 364; Ailes, *Origins of the Royal Arms of England*, pp. 64–74. The second seal of William de Mandeville, earl of Essex, c. 1180, and that of Conan de Nesle, count of Soissons, 1178, were based on that of the count of Flanders (*English Romanesque Art: 1066–1200*, ed. Zarnecki, p. 319, and P. Bony, *Un Siècle de Sceaux Figurés (1135–1235): Le Sceau image de la personne en France d'Oïl, Angleterre, Ecosse et pays de Lorraine* (Paris, 2002), pp. 48, 119, fig. 199).
 - 8 T. A. Heslop in *English Romanesque Art: 1066–1200*, ed. Zarnecki, p. 304; R. Johnes, 'The Seal Matrix of Queen Isabel of Hainault and Some Contemporary Seals' in *Antiquaries Journal* 40 (1960), pp. 73–6 at p. 76. The second seal of Richard's late brother, Henry the Young King, had also been made in France (Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols (Rolls Series, 1868–71), vol. 2, p. 47; *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis: the Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I AD 1169–1192 known commonly under the name of Benedict of Peterborough*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (Rolls Series, 1867), vol. 1, p. 43; Smith, 'Henry II's Heir: the *Acta* and Seal of Henry the Young King, 1170–83', 299, 304. For the chancellor as *ex officio* keeper of the great seal see Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England*, vol. 1, pp. 127–29, 145. For the chancellor possibly using only one side of the great seal when issuing mandates in his own name during the reign of Henry II see N. Vincent, 'The Court of Henry II' in *Henry II: New Interpretations*, ed. C. Harper-Bill and N. Vincent (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 278–334 at p. 283.
 - 9 TNA C 146/9520; *Acta of Henry II and Richard I: Hand-list of documents surviving in the original in repositories in the United Kingdom*, ed. J. C. Holt and R. Mortimer (List and Index Society special series 21, 1986), no. 316, dated 6 September 1189 *per manum Willelmi de Longo Campo cancellarii nostri*. An earlier confirmation (TNA DL 10/40) undated but given by the editors of the *Acta* (no. 315) as August 1189 and *data per manum Willelmi Cancellarii [mei]* has slits for a seal tag but no seal survives – could Richard have used his new seal or perhaps that of his chancellor or late father?
 - 10 Lionel Landon, *The Itinerary of Richard I* (Pipe Roll Society, new series 13, 1935), appendix A, p. 174; *Acta of Henry II and Richard I*, ed. Holt and Mortimer, nos 354, 355; *Acta of Henry II and Richard I: A supplementary hand-list of documents surviving in the original in repositories in the United Kingdom, France, Ireland, Belgium and the USA*, Part 2, ed. N. Vincent (List and Index Society special series 27, 1996), nos 195–198, 200. For the vice-chancellor holding the seal see Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England*, vol. 1, pp. 134–35.
 - 11 Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 144; Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, p. 175. Malcael was in charge of Henry II's great seal at the old king's death (*History of William Marshal*, ed. Holden, ll. 9051–52). For the keeper of the seal see N. Karn, 'Roberto de Sigillo: An Unruly Head of the Royal Scriptorium in the 1120s and 1130s', *English Historical Review* 123 (2008), 539–53 at p. 541, n. 17.
 - 12 Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, p. 176. Landon believed it just possible that John now possessed the great seal itself.
 - 13 *Acta of Henry II and Richard I*, ed. Holt and Mortimer, nos 363–65; *Acta of Henry II and Richard I*, Pt 2, ed. Vincent, no. 223.
 - 14 It appears to have been last used in England (Portsmouth) on 6 May 1194 (*Acta of Henry II and Richard I*, ed. Holt and Mortimer, nos 372, 373), and on the continent on 7 January 1198 (Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, p. 178). The first known use of Richard's second great seal is 16 May though it was very probably used on 14 May (Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, p. 178).
 - 15 Howden, *Chronica*, ed. Stubbs, vol. 3, p. 267; Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, p. 177; J. H. Round, *Feudal England* (London, 1895), pp. 542; K. Norgate, *Richard the Lion Heart* (London, 1924), pp. 338–9; *Pipe Roll 7 Richard I*, ed. D. M. Stenton (Pipe Roll Society, new series 6, 1929) p. xxix.
 - 16 *Is erat tenor carte nostre in primo sigillo nostro. Quod quia aliquando perditum fuit, et, dum capti essemus in alem[annia], in aliena potestate constitutum, mutatum est. Huius autem innovationis testes sunt Hii (quoted in Round, *Feudal England*, p. 542).*
 - 17 Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, p. 179, where he quotes the contemporary chronicler, Ralph de Coggeshall describing the renewing charge as 'the climax of misfortune'; see also Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 332.
 - 18 *Et Willelmo aurifabro qui fecit sigillum R[egis] ii m. ad unam robam emendam et pro solutione sue mercedis (Pipe Roll 7 Richard I, pp. xxix and 113).*
 - 19 *Et ad sigillum R[egis] novum faciendum platam de pondere v m. per breve eiusdem [H. Cant' archiepiscopi] (Chancellor's Roll 8 Richard I :1196 (Pipe Roll*

- Society, new series 7, 1930), p. 19). The chancellor's rolls are counter-rolls or duplicates of the pipe rolls; it is quoted here because the pipe roll for 8 Richard I is missing. The years quoted in the two rolls are regnal and not Exchequer years.
- 20 Howden, *Chronica*, ed. Stubbs, vol. 4, p. 66; Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, p. 179; Round, *Feudal England*, p. 547.
 - 21 Round, *Feudal England*, pp. 547–8. Norgate too believed the change was made in 1198 (*Richard the Lion Heart*, pp. 338–9).
 - 22 R. fitz Nigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario: The Dialogue of the Exchequer*, ed. E. Amt, and *The Constitutio Domus Regis*, ed. S. Church (Oxford, 2007), pp. 29, 33, 95; *Dialogus de Scaccario: The Course of the Exchequer and The Constitutio Domus Regis*, ed. C. Johnson, F. E. L. Carter and D. E. Greenway (Oxford, 1983), pp. 19, 21, 61, 62.
 - 23 Eustace, vice-chancellor under Longchamp, dean of Salisbury, elected bishop of Ely 10 August 1197, keeper of the great seal probably in September 1197, and created chancellor in May 1198. *Memoranda Roll 1 John*, ed. H. G. Richardson (Pipe Roll Society, 21, 1943), p. xxxvi. Alternatively, such an unprecedented mercenary action may have been the brain child of the new chief justiciar since Christmas 1193, Hubert Walter archbishop of Canterbury, a man keen to explore every possible source of revenue for his royal master (R. V. Turner and R. H. Heiser, *The Reign of Richard the Lionheart: Ruler of the Angevin Empire, 1189–1199* (Harlow, 2000), p. 157; see also Gillingham, *Richard I*, pp. 274–5).
 - 24 John: D. Wilmer Dykes, 'The Anglo-Irish Coinage and the Ancient Arms of Ireland', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 96 (1966), 111–20 at pp. 119–20; Henry III: Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, no. 100; and Andrew II: *Sigilla Regum – Reges Sigillorum*, ed. E. Géza, S. Miklós, and S. Károly (Budapest, 2001), pp. 44–9. The star and crescent were often used on the seals of ecclesiastics, for example, Roger Longespee, on his seal (1285) as bishop of Coventry and Lichfield (TNA E 329/375; Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, no. 1633). For the religious significance of the star and crescent see N. Rogers, 'Texts and Images of Marian Devotion', in *England in the Thirteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1989 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. W. M. Ormrod (Stamford, 1991), pp. 69–103 at pp. 88–9; and of the sun and moon see M. Schapiro, 'An Illuminated English Psalter of the Early Thirteenth Century', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 23 (1960), 179–89 at p. 184.
 - 25 Longchamp's personal (pointed oval) seal used as a counterseal bore round the border the legend DOMINI REGIS ANGLIE CANCELL' and in the field a wavy star (estoile) and crescent with W. DE LONGO CAMPO subscribing the crescent; TNA DL 27/3; Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, no. 1493; *English Episcopal Acta 31: Ely 1109–1197*, ed. N. Karn (Oxford, 2005), p. cxlviii, pl. iv. For Longchamp using this seal instead of the Exchequer seal (*sigillum parvum*) while he was justiciar see Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (Rolls Series, 1879–80), vol. 1, p. 509; *English Episcopal Acta 31: Ely 1109–1197*, ed. Karn, p. cxlviii; *Pleas before the King or his Justices, 1198–1202*, ed. D. M. Stenton, 2 vols (Selden Society, 67, for 1948/49, 1952/53), vol. 1, p. 350. I am grateful to Professor T. A. Heslop for first bringing Longchamp's seal to my attention.
 - 26 'Itinerary of King Richard', ed. Stubbs, vol. 1, p. 197; Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, no. 21146. Edmund, son of Henry III, bore a star and crescents on one of his seals (TNA E 101/153/7).
 - 27 The arguments are discussed by Ailes, *The Origins of the Royal Arms of England*, pp. 72–5.
 - 28 *Dialogus de Scaccario*, ed. E. Amt, pp. 21, 29, 95, 97; ed. Johnson, pp. 14, 19, 61, 62; Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England*, vol. 1, pp. 143–5.
 - 29 Gervase of Canterbury, *Historical Works*, ed. Stubbs, vol. 1, p. 509.
 - 30 Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, p. 173, quoting *The Coucher Book of Selby*, ed. J. T. Fowler, (Yorkshire Archaeological Association, Record Series, 10, 1891), vol. 1, p. 26.
 - 31 J. Ayloffe, *Calendars of the Ancient Charters etc and of the Welch and Scottish Rolls now remaining in the Tower of London* (1774), pp. lxxviii–ix, 348. Charter listed in *Acta of Henry II and Richard I*, ed. Holt and Mortimer, no. 367. For an example of the first great seal in red wax: Canterbury Cathedral Archives CCA-DCc-ChAnt/C28. For Richard's so-called second coronation see J. T. Appleby, *England without Richard 1189–99* (London, 1965), pp. 137–9.
 - 32 The spray may have been *planta genista* in allusion to Richard's grandfather, Geoffrey Plantagenet, though such floral decoration was not uncommon on princely and noble seals – a very similar example can be seen on a finely engraved seal now in Hereford Cathedral possibly dating to Richard's reign, and on the seal of Alexander II who succeeded to the Scottish throne in 1214 (Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, no. 14777); I am grateful to Dr Elizabeth

- New for bringing the Hereford seal to my attention. For the *planta genista* as the badge of the Plantagenets see *Complete Peerage*, ed. G. E. C[ockayne], 14 vols (London, 1910–98), vol. 11, appendix G, p. 140 note e, and M. Aurell, ‘Henry II and Arthurian Legend’ in *Henry II: New Interpretations*, ed. Harper-Bill and Vincent, pp. 362–94 (363). Floral accompaniments also occur on the seals of William FitzRobert second earl of Gloucester, 1147–83 (*Earldom of Gloucester Charters: The Charters and Scribes of the of the Earls and Countesses of Gloucester*, ed. R. B. Patterson (Oxford, 1973), p. 24), and Philip d’Alsace count of Flanders (G. Demay, *Inventaire des sceaux de la Flandre*, 2 vols (Paris, 1873), no. 138 where dated 1170). The Exchequer seal may have been used on this occasion since parts of the treasury (where the Exchequer seal was normally kept) might still have resided at Winchester (Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England*, vol. 1, pp. 97, 144, n. 2; R. L. Poole, *The Exchequer in the Twelfth Century* (London, 1912), pp. 70–2; H. Roseveare, *The Treasury: The Evolution of a British Institution* (London, 1969), p. 21; and H. Hall, *Antiquities and Curiosities of the Exchequer* (London, 1891), pp. 15–18).
- 33 I am grateful to Dr Christopher Whittick and Professor Paul Brand for this observation.
- 34 Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, p. 173; H. Jenkinson, ‘The Great Seal of England: Deputed or Departmental Seals’, *Archaeologia* 85 (1935), pp. 293–338 at p. 297 and pl. 84 (1 and 2); J. Cherry, ‘Heads, Arms and Badges: Royal Representation on Seals’, in *Good Impressions*, ed. Adams, Cherry and Robinson, pp. 12–16 at p. 12 and fig. 1; A. Ailes, ‘Powerful Impressions: Symbols of Office and Authority on Secular Seals’ in *Signs and Symbols: Proceedings of the 2006 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. J. Cherry and A. Payne (Donnington, 2009), pp. 18–28 at p. 21; P. Chaplais, *Piers Gaveston: Edward II’s Adoptive Brother* (Oxford, 1994), p. 37 and n. 77.
- 35 *Calendar of Royal Documents: Richard I* (nos 140–6), *Westminster Abbey Charters, 1066–c. 1214*: London Record Society 25, ed. E. Mason and J. Bray (1988), p. 77, no. 146; Westminster Abbey Muniments XLVII; *Acta of Henry II and Richard I*, ed. Holt and Mortimer, no. 398 (where it is given no year date).
- 36 For the Exchequer seal and seal of absence under Henry III see F. West, *The Justiciarship in England 1066–1232* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 239–40, 269–70; Chaplais, *Piers Gaveston*, pp. 36–7; and H. Jenkinson, ‘The Great Seal of England’, *Antiquaries Journal* 16 (1936), 8–28 at p. 23.
- 37 Howden, *Chronica*, ed. Stubbs, vol. 3, p. 28.
- 38 Gervase of Canterbury, *Historical Works*, ed. Stubbs, vol. 1, p. 509; Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, p. 174.
- 39 Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, p. 183.
- 40 Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, pp. 173–4.
- 41 Benedict of Peterborough, *Gesta Ricardi*, ed. Stubbs, vol. 2, p. 224; Howden, *Chronica*, ed. Stubbs, vol. 3, p. 154; *Memoranda Roll 1 John*, ed. Richardson, pp. lxxiii–iv.
- 42 Gervase of Canterbury, *Historical Works*, ed. Stubbs, vol. 1, p. 509; Gerald of Wales, *Opera*, ed. Brewer, Dimock and Warner, vol. 4, p. 408, where he confirms that the seal in question is that residing at the Exchequer; Turner and Heiser, *The Reign of Richard the Lionheart*, p. 131.

Seals and the law in the Thirteenth Century

Paul Brand

It comes as something of a surprise to a legal historian who is looking for the first time in detail at the different uses or functions of seals which have a direct connection with the law in the long thirteenth century that seals were used in so many different ways. The legal historian tends to think of them primarily as a means of authenticating deeds, the various different kinds of document relating to title to land and its tenure (including charters of feoffment, confirmations, quitclaims and the like), or relating to personal obligations such as acknowledgements of debt (whether in the form of written bonds or written tallies)¹ or receipts for the payment of debts, agreements or covenants (typically bipartite, with both parties to the agreement having their own copy sealed by the other party) and grants of annuities; and also as a means of authenticating wills or testaments.² But a second, and quite separate, legally significant function they also evidently performed was in simply securing chests or boxes which contained objects of value while they were in the hands of a custodian. The container or containers might be a chest or a strong box which contained charters or bonds. In 1296 John of Clinton and his wife Ida and Ida's sister Margaret of Oddingsells, for example, sued the prior of Coventry in the Common Bench for the return of 60 charters, which the father of the two sisters (William of Oddingsells) had handed over on deposit (*nomine depositi*) and had contained grants of lands in four named places. The prior agreed

that William had handed over a chest and a strong box closed with his seal but said that he did not know what they contained and he brought them into court with the seals still attached and unbroken. The sisters agreed they had been so delivered and that the seals on both were still intact and their attorney declared himself content, without apparently checking that all 60 charters were still there.³ It might be just a deed box (*pixes*) containing a deed that was being held in escrow and which had been sealed by both parties. In 1303 the royal clerk Adam of Osgoodby sued Ralph de Shirley for the return of a deed in the name of the prior and convent of Lenton granting Adam an annual rent, which Adam's servant had, he said, handed over to Ralph earlier that year at Nottingham. Ralph, however, claimed that the deed had been handed over to him jointly by Adam's agent and the prior's steward in a deed box (*in quadam pixide*) sealed with their seals and on condition that, if the prior presented Adam's agent to a specific church and he was instituted to it, the deed was to be returned to the prior.⁴ The container might also be a strong box which contained only money. In 1298 John of Walden sued John Clerk of Northallerton in the Common Bench for payment of £20 and explained that he had handed over the money to him at Northallerton in 1295 under his seal to look after and to restore to him whenever he wished. John, however, denied receiving the money under such terms.⁵ In a 1303 King's

Bench case Peter of Cave sued Fulk de Hotoft on the basis that he had entrusted a strongbox (*forcerium*) to him containing £11 under seal at Southwell but that Fulk had broken into it and taken the money.⁶ A third distinct category (though there is some overlap with the two previous categories) was the use of seals (both private and official) for various official purposes. When Jewish chirograph chests were established in 1194 as a safe place for a copy of all Jewish bonds for money loaned in England, the chests were to have locks but the Christian and Jewish chirographers were also to affix their seals to these locks.⁷ Subsequently when the chests were periodically closed, normally in connection with the levying of a tallage, the chests were also sealed by those who came to conduct the scrutiny of the chests. Sheriffs making distrains on defendants to secure their appearance in court commonly sealed barns and granges to secure their contents and show they had been seized into the king's hands. This may have been an official seal for we also find references to precepts to levy a debt being issued 'under the seal of the castle' (*sub sigillo castri*) in Yorkshire in 1293,⁸ and to a written receipt given on the handing over of a writ of summons in the same year in Hampshire being made 'under the seal of the exchequer of Winchester castle'.⁹ Royal justices also used their own private seals in the course of official business. Judicial writs issued in the course of legal proceedings seem initially to have been sealed with the personal seal of the justice who attested the writ, but were then supposed to be taken for sealing by chancery,¹⁰ and a statute of 1285 (Westminster II, c. 31) established a procedure under which a dissatisfied litigant (or more likely his lawyer) who had had an argument disallowed but not recorded was to produce a bill recording his argument and to request one of the justices of the court to seal it with his own (personal) seal.¹¹ A different chapter of the same statute (Westminster II, c. 13) established a formal requirement that each sheriff when conducting enquiries into offences at his biennial tourn was to ensure that the written verdict of the jury making the presentment be sealed by the jurors's seals.¹² In a 1305 Common Bench case Agnes, who claimed to be the widow of Nicholas of Stainton, brought an action to recover substantial lands of hers in Yorkshire which had been alienated by Nicholas. The tenant of

these lands argued that he was not obliged to answer the claim since Nicholas was still alive and living at Greystoke in Cumberland. Agnes said that he had died long ago at Stamford in Lincolnshire. The case was adjourned to allow both parties to produce evidence on this point. Agnes brought four individual witnesses who under examination agreed that Nicholas had been hanged at Stamford in 1300 for a robbery in Crowland marsh and also a writing to the same effect in the name of 13 burgesses of Stamford. This was sealed with their seals.¹³

My main concern in this paper, however, is with a somewhat narrower topic: the arguments about seals which were made during civil litigation, that is (in the main) arguments made by litigants, or more likely their professional lawyers, which impugned the validity of documents to which seals had allegedly been attached, and more broadly what these arguments have to tell us about how English thirteenth century law treated seals as a necessary form of documentary validation. I will start with arguments that impugned the validity of a 'sealed' document on the grounds of a defect in the seal impression or in the way an impression was attached to the document it was supposedly validating or (in one case at least) the lack of any impression at all. The latter seems quite anomalous, an example of something that did not normally happen, probably because normally the courts would simply have rejected any attempt to use an unsealed document in court for probative purposes. The case is a covenant case of 1291 in the Common Bench in which the plaintiff was suing on a 16-year lease made by the defendants' father, which had been interrupted by a wardship after the father's death, and which she was now seeking to have honoured. When asked for evidence of the lease the plaintiff produced the father's deed to which a tag or tongue (*cauda*) was attached, but no seal. Not surprisingly, the defendants asked for judgment whether such a deed was binding. Surprisingly, the plaintiff was allowed to plead that a seal (impression) had been attached to the lease until the defendants and others had broken into her house and torn off the seal and was allowed to join issue on this claim so that it went to a jury.¹⁴ More common were claims that, even though there was an impression of a seal attached to the document, there were significant defects in that seal or in the way it had been attached. In

a 1292 Common Bench case Walter Scarlet, a lawyer, sued the prior of Castleacre on a debt. When he proffered the prior's bond (which had allegedly been made in 1285) as evidence of the debt it was noted that the impression was in two pieces, one of which was still attached to the writing, but the other quite separate from it. The prior challenged the validity of the bond as proof of the debt on the grounds that the bond was not sealed with the whole of the seal, but also on the ground that the wax was so decrepit (*inveterata*) that it was clear that the wax could not have been attached in 1285. The case was adjourned for judgment but none recorded.¹⁵ In a case the following year, however, where a warrantor was defending title to land in Cornwall and produced a charter in the name of the claimant's uncle granting the land, the enrolment tells us that when it was first produced in court it was produced with the seal impression intact, but that it had subsequently accidentally (*casualiter*) become split into two parts, so that the face (*impressio*) had become separated from the rest, as a result of decay (*putrefactionem*) and age. There was no challenge to this but only as to whether it really had conveyed any title, a quite separate point.¹⁶ In a 1307 detinue of charters case in which the plaintiff was seeking the return of two charters from a relative the defendant produced a charter whose seal (impression) was broken and heavily damaged but subsequently repaired with what was evidently new wax on the back and said that it had come to his hands in this condition. The plaintiff, however, claimed that the charter had come to his hands with an undamaged seal (to which no suspicion attached) and refused to accept the charter since he was bound to restore it to her in the same state as it had been when he had received it. There is no sequel to this but she was apparently seeking some kind of compensation for his lack of care.¹⁷

There are two cases in which questions were raised about the way in which a seal (impression) was attached to the document it was said to be validating. In one heard in the 1286 Buckinghamshire eyre the record shows that the warrantor of the defendants produced a charter in the name of the claimant's uncle Henry, granting the warrantor's ancestor the land with a promise of warranty. The seal attached to the document was, however, bound up with a piece of string (*quodam filo ligatur*)

and the justices untied (*deligaverunt*) the string in the presence of the parties and found the seal had been cut through the middle (*scissum per medium*) although the face (*impressio*) was whole and also the dorse (but they were separate from each other, I assume) and that part of the wax remained on the schedule from which the seal hung (*pendebat*), which agreed with the ends. It was then rebound by the same justices and handed over to the claimant to answer. He denied that what was there constituted a sealed document and characterised it as a schedule that was not ratified by Henry's seal. The court did not have in the end to rule on this point, nor did a jury.¹⁸ A related, but different problem, was raised by a 1294 Common Bench case in which a former justice's clerk (Henry [Gerard] of Guildford) sued the abbot of Bury St Edmund's for arrears of an annuity the abbot had granted him. When Henry produced the bond which he asserted had granted him the annuity and had been sealed with the abbot's seal attached to a tongue (*cauda*) it was noted that the tongue had become detached (*eradicata*) from the writing and then (evidently rather crudely) re-attached to it by a thread (*quodam filo*). The abbot at once challenged this attempt to bind him by a bond from which there was no seal hanging (*dependens*). At this point Henry removed his attorney John Loveday from suing on his behalf and brought an oral complaint against John in the Common Bench. He had entrusted him with the deed in order to prosecute the case but it had been damaged while in his hands and the tail broken (off). John did not deny that he had received the bond intact but did claim that it had been broken off as a result of a crush at the bar of the court (*pressitudine etc. ad barram etc.*). It may be assumed that it was John who had crudely reattached it to the deed. There the story seems to end, but Henry does not seem to have got his money and John is still to be found in practice as a professional attorney in 1300.¹⁹

In a rather larger group of cases there was no challenge to the seal itself or to the way it was attached to the deed, but only as to whether the seal had been validly or properly attached to the document concerned. In two cases, for example, the claim seems to be that a document had only been attached as a result of improper pressure to do so. In an Essex assize of mort d'ancestor heard before the baronial justiciar Hugh Bigod in December 1259, the tenant

(Agnes) pleaded a quitclaim of the land from her stepdaughter Alice. Alice agreed that she had put her *signum* (which must here mean seal) to the deed but said she had done this by compulsion because Agnes and her relatives (*amici*) had kept her shut up in a chamber until she had done so. The jury, however, told a different story. Alice had made the quitclaim at her father's request before he married her step-mother and had done so voluntarily. Evidently she had only repented later.²⁰ In a second Essex case of 1294 (an attain of an assize of novel disseisin) in which one Isabel, calling herself the daughter of Maud de Cloville, was suing William son of William of Feering for a substantial holding in Patching and Broomfield something similar was again alleged. A detailed jury verdict allows us to reconstruct what seems to have happened. Isabel had been the daughter of William of Feering by his first wife Maud and these lands had belonged to Maud. After Maud's death William had only a life interest in the lands and they were to pass to Isabel after his death. William had then remarried (to a second Isabel, who was the defendant's mother). Isabel had gone on living with her father and step-mother and her father had provided her with food and clothing. Over a two year period he had gone out of his way to cultivate his daughter's favour. Then he had asked her to make a quitclaim of the land to him, which would allow the land to be inherited by any son he had by the second marriage (we are not told whether that son had yet been born). She refused. He beat her and ordered her not to leave her room. She was shut up in her room for three days until (through fear) she agreed to do what her father wanted. Her father then had a seal made for her and sent for his neighbours and told them that she was going to release her rights to the land. On his orders she came to the hall and in tears (*lacrimando*) agreed to the release but only on condition that her father observed a separate agreement under which he promised to arrange a marriage for her with a husband with land to the value of £20 a year or to give her 100 marks for her marriage. Her father then showed her the deed and asked her to affix the seal to it. She said she did not know how to, but agreed that one of the neighbours (John Benet) seal it in her name. Her father handed it over to John to affix the seal and he handed it on to Isabel. He told her to remove

the seal [matrix] from the wax [impression] with her own hand and give her father the deed if she wished to make the grant. This was evidently the crucial part of the physical act of sealing a deed. She took the deed and removed the seal from wax and delivered the deed to her father. Eventually she sent for a kinswoman (presumably a relation of her mother's) and they went to the county court at Chelmsford and there stated publicly that the deed had been obtained by coercion. The jury concluded that the deed had indeed been obtained by force and fear and this invalidated the quitclaim. The attain jury upheld the original verdict in her favour.²¹

No physical force or threats were involved, however, in other cases. Ellis le Latimer claimed arrears of an annuity of £5 a year from William of Preston in the 1247 Northamptonshire eyre. William denied that the deed or the seal were his. He had promised Ellis a smaller annuity (of 40s a year) in return for service as his steward and he had so acted. Ellis had then gone to Northampton and drawn up the bond and had a seal made which he had then attached to the bond. He denied that the seal had ever been in William's own custody prior to this (which suggests it may have been afterwards). Eventually the parties settled, with Ellis remitting the annuity in return for a small lump sum.²² In other cases it is quite clear that the seal is genuine but the defendant's claim seems to be that the plaintiff was (like Ellis) an agent who had sealed the deed or bond while he had control of his master's seal but without his knowledge. This may be the situation, for example, behind a case in the 1271 Sussex eyre in which William Graundyn sued William de Braose for four and half years arrears of an annual rent of £10 on the basis of a bond allegedly made on 12 December 1265, and Braose agreed the seal had once been his but denied that he had made the deed or the seal been appended to the bond with his knowledge (*de consencia sua*) and that the plaintiff had ever been seised of it.²³ It is certainly the situation in a 1280 case where Robert de Tibetot and his wife Eve sued John de Camoys for acquittance of services demanded by the earl of Oxford as chief lord and for which they had been distrained by the earl. As proof of John's duty to acquit them they produced a charter in John's name promising them and Robert's heirs warranty and acquittance. John denied that it

was his deed. He admitted that the seal attached had been his but claimed that he had entrusted it to one Walter de Fanecurt who had been in his service and who had made and sealed the charter without his knowledge. Robert and Eve took a firm line. He had acknowledged that the seal was his and the deed obliged him to acquittance. If he had entrusted its custody to someone who had betrayed his trust it was he should bear the loss, not them (*et sibi debeat imputari quare minus secure illud tradidit in custodia*).²⁴

Less obviously an agent is the Thomas de Chaunceus who in the 1268 Dorset eyre sued Hugh Lovel for £100 on the basis of a bond made 4 years earlier by Hugh's brother Richard, obliging himself and his heirs to payment. Hugh denied that he owed the money or that the deed had been properly made by his brother. He did not deny that it was his brother's seal. What he did say was that the bond had been made either after his brother's death, or while he was unable to speak or to have knowledge of the writing or the seal and it had therefore been made without his will or knowledge. A jury was summoned to determine whether or not this was true and it was drawn from the county where the bond had allegedly been made.²⁵ This is one of a number of cases where the litigant attacking the validity of a sealed deed claimed the seal had been used by a third party without the knowledge or consent of the owner of the seal or even after his death. In a case of 1198 Robert de Pinkeny sued his brother or half-brother William for land which had been given to Robert by his father Ralph and of which Robert had been seised in the reign of Henry II. William denied that the charter of grant produced by Robert was genuine. He admitted that the seal attached to it might well have been his father's but said that the charter had been made after his father's death while Robert's mother had retained his seal and before William had gained possession of it through a complaint made to the king.²⁶ Almost a century later when Robert son of Thomas Utdred sued Arnold de Percy of Kildale for the Yorkshire manor of Killingwick by Pocklington, Arnold claimed that the writ and suit should be quashed because he held the manor jointly with his wife Christine by the gift of William de Percy. Robert, however, argued that the charter Arnold produced to prove the joint

feoffment was not as believable (*adeo credibilis*) in his hands as it would have been in those of a stranger since he was William's son and heir and the seal had come into his possession after his father's death and so he could seal whatever he liked with it.²⁷ Suggestive also about what was supposed to happen on the death of the owner of a seal and what might happen to the seal if it did not is a Norfolk dower case brought by Lucy the widow of William son of William heard in the Common Bench in 1295. One of Lucy's late husband's heiresses defended her failure to endow Lucy on the grounds that Lucy had refused to hand over William's seal and others alleged that Lucy had used the seal after his death to seal writings to their disinheritance. Lucy denied having kept the seal and said she had handed it over to the custody of master Richard of Ringstead, the official of the local ecclesiastical court. A jury found that Lucy had only kept the seal till the day of her husband's funeral and had then been willing to hand it over to the husband of one of the heiresses but he had refused to accept it. Since he had refused she had handed it over to the official, presumably in a container that was sealed with his own seal. Her attorney then produced it in court with the official's seal still intact. The seal matrix was then destroyed (*cancellatur*) in court and the pieces of silver (*argentum inde confractum*) handed over to the husband of one of the heiresses.²⁸

Nor was there any doubt that the seal itself was genuine in a major case heard in the Common Bench in 1292–3. What was in doubt was whether it had properly been affixed to the obligation in question and in such a way as to make that obligation binding. The case was one brought by master Leonardo de Lavagna, an Italian (probably a member of the Fieschi family) in the service of master Giffred de Vezano, a papal agent in England, against the prior of St Swithin's Winchester (Winchester cathedral priory).²⁹ In it he laid claim to no less than 520 marks arrears of an annual rent of 40 marks a year (13 years of arrears). He based his claim on an obligation in the name of William of Taunton the late prior of the cathedral priory [1250–55] and the convent, which had been payable once a year 2 weeks after Easter at the New Temple in London. The prior denied the obligation was the deed of the convent and the question of whether it was or not went to a local (Hampshire) jury. When the jury appeared

at Westminster in Michaelmas term 1292 the jury did not give a straight answer. They first explained that prior William had in fact been removed from office by the bishop-elect, Aymer de Valence, before the making of the writing and without the bishop-elect needing to go through any kind of process, since both he and his episcopal predecessors had enjoyed the freedom to appoint and remove priors and obedientaries in the priory. While still in office William and the convent had appointed four monks of the house to take custody of the common conventual seal (the seal that was capable of binding the convent in perpetuity) and after William's removal they had sealed a blank piece of parchment without the consent of the convent and sent it to the Roman Curia (evidently to William, who was aggrieved at his removal from office and was suing there to reverse it) and it was only when it reached Rome that the bond had been written. The jury concluded that the writing was not the deed of the convent and so did not bind them. The court did not, however, give judgment. The formal record indicates that the parties reached a concord in Michaelmas term 1293. This confirmed that the obligation was binding on the priory but master Leonardo remitted his damages and a small part of the arrears. There are also two law reports of different stages of this case which add quite considerably to what we know. Master Leonardo (despite the unfavourable jury verdict) evidently complained to king and council about the delay in the case and the case was then discussed before the king's council. There was then further argument in the Common Bench itself. Chief Justice Mettingham was all for disregarding the jury's verdict. His main argument for doing so was that when a jury gave a verdict and some of it was relevant and some of it was not the justice hearing the case was at liberty only to take account of what was relevant. Here all that was relevant and within the jury's knowledge was that this was the convent's seal and that it had been affixed to the parchment in England (for the jury could only know things which had happened in England). Their finding that the document had been written at Rome was irrelevant because an English jury could (in the eyes of the law) have no knowledge of anything done outside England. The general legal rule to be applied then was that it was up

to the possessor of the seal to take good care of it (*hom deit bien garder soen seal*) and that when someone avowed a seal as theirs [and by analogy when a jury found that a seal was a genuine seal] then this conceded or validated everything that was written on the document thus sealed (*ceo est qe est suthe le seal contenuz*). The serjeant Nicholas of Warwick, acting for master Leonardo, put it even more pithily: that one who acknowledges a seal as his deed also acknowledges the ink and parchment to which the seal was attached (*il conust le enqe e le parchemin conteneuz sur le seal*). Mettingham and Warwick had no direct answer to the argument put by the prior's counsel that the jury had found (and this was a matter within their knowledge) that the seal had been affixed invalidly because without the consent of the convent. Mettingham did, however, have an indirect answer to this. This was that, whatever imperfections there might have been in the original bond had been cured in prior proceedings in an ecclesiastical court against the prior's predecessor, where that predecessor had acknowledged owing the annuity.

A different kind of disconnect between the document and the seal was raised by a Common Bench case of 1301. Nicholas of Weyland was the custodian of a bond entrusted to him in 1298 jointly by Alina the widow of Thomas of Otley and Peter of Denardeston by which Peter had obliged himself to pay an annual rent of ten pounds a year. It was to be returned to him if by St Andrew's day 1298 he had enfeoffed her of tenements belonging to him in Suffolk to the value of half the manor of Otley for life. Alina sued him for the return of the bond and Peter was then given notice to appear to make any argument he could against the return of the bond. On appearance Peter pleaded a subsequent agreement that had materially altered the conditions he had to meet and he proffered an indented schedule containing the terms which he asserted was her deed. However, the deed said nothing about her having put her seal to the deed and indeed a report of the case says that the end of the schedule simply said 'in witness of which the parties have sworn on the saints' (*en tesmoynance de ceo les parties unt jurez sur seintz*) and that the seal attached to the deed had no writing in the margin (*circumferencia*) but simply an image of a lion couchant. Alina did not deny that it was her seal but said it could not be considered her deed since the writing made no mention of a seal being attached. Her

counsel (Gilbert of Tothby) stated this as a general rule: every deed produced in court to which a party was required to answer ought to attest whose deed it was by the seal and by certain words about the sealing contained in the deed. This document failed that test. The court agreed. Peter was pleading an agreement to stop Alina from obtaining the bond but had failed to show any suitable deed (*factum competens*) and so it was adjudged that the bond be delivered to her.³⁰

In only a small number of cases do we hear of forged, or allegedly forged, seals. In an entry in the roll of the 1292 Lancashire eyre we read that Adam son of Ralph Smith of Claughton and Walter *sigillator* had been attached by the marshal of the court for the forgery and counterfeiting (*falsacione et contrafaccione*) of the seal of Thomas of Singleton, apparently because it had come to the notice of the court while it was in session. Walter claimed that Adam had brought him a charter sealed with Thomas's seal relating to a tenement Thomas had given Adam and asked him to make a similar seal in return for payment. He had agreed to do this for 6d. He seems to have had second thoughts after making it and because he feared Adam was going to use it to make a forgery he had refused to hand it over and the original charter back. Adam acknowledged the charter was his but claimed he had lost it in court, rather than handed it over to Walter, and he denied asking him to make a similar seal. The jury said that Adam had indeed handed over the charter to Walter and had asked him to make a similar seal so he could have another charter for additional lands. On this basis Walter was acquitted and Adam remanded to custody, securing his release only for a fine of 40s.³¹ The same year in Easter term in the Common Bench we hear of a second, and apparently more successful, attempt at the forgery of a seal in a case which was brought by Denise de Mountchesney, the great-granddaughter and sole heiress of the Richard of Anstey of the Anstey case. In her (civil) action Denise alleged that Robert Constable clerk had falsely composed a letter of presentation in her name and without her knowledge or consent to the vacant Yorkshire church of Foston [on the Wolds] which belonged to her presentation and had sealed it with a counterfeit seal (*quodam sigillo adulterino*) and had then handed it over to the archbishop of York, the local diocesan, as

though Denise had presented him. No dates are mentioned but this was probably in 1291. A law report supplies a missing detail: that the archbishop had immediately suspected that there was something wrong with the letters and had delayed taking action on them. Robert, however, had proved that the seal was indeed her seal by the testimony of William Constable, Thomas of Holm and Thomas of Houton and the action was also brought against them for falsely providing that testimony. Robert had been admitted to the church and had gained corporal possession of it. In the oral presentation made to the court (her 'count') made by her serjeant Denise alleged that all the important things had happened at Denise's place of residence in Hertfordshire (Anstey). It had been there that the counterfeit seal had been made, there that he had made the forged letter of presentation in her name and sealed it. This was almost certainly untrue, but may have been intended to ensure that Denise benefitted from a favourable local jury. The serjeant claimed the enormous sum of £1000 in damages. The enrolment also mentions that the vicar[-general] of the archbishop sent to court the letter of presentation as he had been instructed. The report adds that chief justice Mettingham said that a writ had been specially authorised by common council (*par le commun consayl*) to the sheriff of Yorkshire to warn the archbishop to send the letter to the court since the king (and this sounds as though it may have been Edward I in person who said this) wanted to convict (*voleit attendre*) not just the forgers of his seal but also the seals of the magnates of his realm (*haut gent de sun realme*), a category that evidently embraced Denise. Robert Constable, the main beneficiary of the forged letter, and also according to Denise the main actor in its forgery, denied doing so and asserted in his defence that Thomas of Holm (her Yorkshire bailiff) had handed over the letter of presentation to him at Fridaythorpe in Yorkshire (which was where Thomas came from) but could not budge the court into having this tried in Yorkshire. Thomas denied having given any testimony to prove the false letter and this went to a Yorkshire jury drawn from Doncaster (which was where Denise alleged the process of proving the seal had taken place) and also from Foston. William Constable and Thomas of Houton played for time and said they were not obliged to answer

on this secondary matter until the primary cause was settled. No sequel is recorded but some kind of skulduggery on the part of William and Robert Constable can indeed be suspected since the record of an assize of darrein presentment and a letter from Geoffrey Agullon to William of Thornton, the archbishop's attorney, both indicate that William was a rival claimant to patronage of the living though the agreement which ended litigation between them and others apparently allowed William the first presentation.

Some interesting conclusions are suggested by the material discussed in this paper. The first is in relation to personal responsibility for the act of 'sealing a document'. The 1294 Essex case suggests that the crucial element in this may have been not the affixing the seal or the pressing of the seal matrix to the warm wax, but the removal of the matrix from the wax, the first point at which neighbours witnessing an act could see the legend on the seal as imprinted on the wax, and the delivery of the deed with the wax seal impression on it to the intended beneficiary. The second (suggested by the 1301 case) is that for a document to be regarded as the sealed document of a particular individual it was essential that the document itself mention the fact that it had been sealed by him or her. A third, however, is that under certain circumstances (but perhaps only quite exceptional ones) the king's courts might be willing (as in the 1292–93 case) to enforce the terms of a sealed document even when they knew that those terms had been written at Rome on what had been sent from England as a blank, but sealed, parchment. A fourth is that there were social, and perhaps even legal, rules about what was supposed to happen to someone's seal after their death which we seem to see in a case of 1295: that a man's widow might be thought to be acting correctly in keeping her husband's seal until the day of the funeral but must then offer to surrender it to the heir (or to the heir's husband) and, if he refused it, would sensibly entrust it to the official of the local ecclesiastical court, but that its eventual fate (as overseen in this case by the king's court) was for the seal to be destroyed and its silver content handed over to the heir. A fifth seems to be that it was relatively common for landowners to entrust their seals, part of the time at least, to their men of business, and this made it possible for those agents to seal

deeds without the seal-owners' knowledge, and that even if it might be possible to plead this in defence if the agent relied on a deed thus sealed it might well not be allowed as a defence against a deed sealed in favour of a third party (as the 1280 case suggests). The cases mentioned at the start of this paper demonstrate one of the main disadvantages of sealing wax as a means of authenticating documents: the relative fragility of wax (especially in a crowded court room) and the tendency of wax to grow brittle with age; and the 1292 cases I discussed at the end of another, the relative ease with which seals could be copied and then used for gain, without there being in the thirteenth century any criminal sanctions against such an act, though forging the king's seal was quite another matter.

Notes

- 1 There were doubts about the binding nature of the latter as late as 1299: see *John le Lou v. the executors of Roger of Holbrooke*: CP 40/126, m. 172d, but these had been resolved by 1304 (see *Robert of Migham v. John of Thuddne*: CP 40/151, m. 56d and reported in YB 32 & 33 Edward I, p. 185 and BL MS. Additional 31826, f. 360v). See also *Ralph of Fuldton merchant v. Richard of Shirford merchant*: CP 40/156, m. 51, reported in BL MS. Hargrave 375, f. 118r and LI MS. Misc. 738, f. 37r.
- 2 For an interesting case involving two rival testaments appointing different executors see the 1292 case of *master Anthony of Bradney executor of master John de la Wade clerk v. master Peter de Lisel and master Robert de Veteri Terra executors of Peter late bishop of Exeter*: CP 40/96, m. 103, reported in BL MS. Additional 31826, f. 55v.
- 3 CP 40/113, m. 33.
- 4 *Adam of Osgoodby clerk v. Ralph of Shirley*: CP 40/145, m. 74d.
- 5 CP 40/122, m. 80d.
- 6 KB 27/174, m. 16.
- 7 *Stubbs Select Charters*, p. 256.
- 8 JUST 1/1098, m. 3.
- 9 CP 40/101, m. 159.
- 10 See GO Sayles in the introduction to *Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench*, II (Selden Society 57, 1938), pp. lxxxix–xci and see also JUST 1/370, m. 11.
- 11 *Statutes of the Realm*, I, 86–7. For the invocation of this legislation during the so-called 'State Trials' which led to the disgrace of most of the justices in 1289–93 see P. Brand, 'Ethical Standards for Royal Justices in England, c.1175–1307' in *The University of Chicago Law School Round Table* 8, 2 (2001), pp. 239–79 at p. 259.
- 12 *Statutes of the Realm*, I, 81.

- 13 CP 40/153, m. 238d.
- 14 CP 40/90, m. 155: *Margery widow of Geoffrey fitz Adam v. Richard son of Simon Clerk and his wife Alice and her sister Beatrix.*
- 15 CP 40/95, m. 169d.
- 16 CP 40/100, m. 56d: *Laurence de Talmarnaccos v. Osmund de Talmarnaccos.*
- 17 CP 40/164, m. 32d: *Meliora Sherard v. Henry Sherard of Wormwell.*
- 18 86 Bucks 1 in *Earliest English Law Reports*, IV, ed. P. Brand (Selden Society 123, 2007) at pp. 329–32.
- 19 CP 40/103, m. 127d.
- 20 JUST 1/1189, m. 1d: *Alice daughter of Simon Burre v. Agnes of Northfleet.*
- 21 JUST 1/1298, mm. 119–119d.
- 22 JUST 1/614B, m. 10d.
- 23 JUST 1/913, m. 14d.
- 24 CP 40/32, m. 62.
- 25 JUST 1/202, m. 14.
- 26 *Curia Regis Rolls*, I, 45, 66–7.
- 27 CP 40/87, m. 133.
- 28 CP 40/110, m. 49.
- 29 CP 40/92, m. 95. The case is reported in CUL MS. Dd.7.14, f. 273r and (a later stage) in BL MS. Additional 35116, ff. 267r–v.
- 30 CP 40/138, m. 111d. The reports of the case are in BL MSS. Harley 493B, ff. 24r–25r, Harley 572, ff. 182r–v and (but only a fragment) Additional 37657, f. 120r.
- 31 JUST 1/409, m. 15.

Iustitia, notaries and lawyers: the law and seals in late medieval Italy¹

John Cherry

Introduction: The notary in England and Italy

In 1237, Cardinal Otto, at a Council in London, commented that public notaries did not exist in England, and so, did not recommend that a notary public should be required to authenticate instruments, but indicated that there should be more regular use of seals in the church. Not only archbishops and bishops, but all their officials should have seals that declared the title of the office and the institution to which they belonged.²

The dislike of notaries in England was also noted by Master Giovanni da Bologna, an Italian notary in the service of John Pecham, Archbishop of Canterbury, who observed the English reluctance to use notaries: 'Italians, like cautious men, want to have a public instrument for practically every contract they enter into; but the English are just the opposite, and an instrument is rarely asked for unless it is essential'.³

This survey will explore this difference between England and Italy and in particular the use by notaries of wax seals in Italy. The notary is someone, qualified in the law, who talks to those involved, drafts a document, queries it (*rogatio*), prepares the instrument in his own hand, and authenticates it with his distinctive *signum* (also called a *tabellion*, but which will be referred to here as a sign or *signum*). The

document was copied into a public register. In Italy, the development of the notarial system was due to influences from imperial chanceries, the needs of civic authorities, and the Papacy. Fully developed by the twelfth century, it was based in Roman law, while to the north of the Alps, where the legal system was based on common or customary law, the sealed document held sway. There was a considerable variety in legal knowledge and professionalism among notaries.⁴

Michael Clanchy proposed reasons for the northern resistance to the notarial system by pointing out different conventions for dating (instruments are often dated by the Papal rather than the Regnal year), and that the seal had greater personal authority by representing the person authenticating the document. However, he notes the English Statute of Merchants of 1285 came close to the notarial system. Debts were recorded before the mayor, and enrolled in special registers. The test of distinctive hand writing was acknowledged, since the bonds were to be enrolled in the hand of one of the town clerks who was known, and each bond was to be written in a hand that could be distinguished. Although no notarial sign was involved, the possibility of forging seals was recognised, as the seal would be made in two parts – one kept by the Mayor and the other by the Clerk. While this may show, as he suggested, that the virtues of the notarial

system were appreciated by law makers in the thirteenth century, it may also simply mean that law makers were trying to avoid the difficulties created by documents that were un-enrolled and authenticated by a single seal.⁵

Fig. 9.1. Obverse of the seal matrix of Giovanni da Vico, (c. seventeenth century), copper alloy matrix, Ashmolean Museum: R105.

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Fig. 9.2. Reverse of the seal matrix of Giovanni da Vico, (c. seventeenth century), copper alloy matrix, Ashmolean Museum: R105.

© John Cherry. Object: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



Fig. 9.3. Impression from the matrix of Giovanni da Vico (c. 2003), dental wax, Ashmolean Museum R105.

© Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



In contrast to this, the attitude to the wax seal in Italy is complex and less easy to define. Wax seals were used in Italy by bishops in the late eleventh century, and developed in the Papal Chancery and among Papal officials even though the Popes themselves continued to seal in lead. Wax seals were used by towns in the twelfth century. The case of Venice is particularly interesting, since the Doge and Signoria used lead bulls: the Doge's lead bulla having a static representation of the Doge's investiture. However, the Venetian magistracy and administration by the fourteenth century used wax seals with the lion of St Mark on one side and the other the name of the official or the person sealing.⁶

The seal of Giovanni da Vico

Turning to seals, a collection of Italian matrices, now in the Ashmolean Museum Oxford, was acquired by Richard Rawlinson, an early eighteenth-century antiquarian with Jacobite sympathies, in Rome in 1721. He bought the collection, which had been formed in the late seventeenth century by Giovanni Andrea Lorenzani, a Roman bronze caster, in 1721. With the collection came a catalogue, by Abate Valesio or Valesio, compiled in 1708.

The pride of that collection – the first in number and in importance to Abbate Valesio – was literally the number One seal – that of Giovanni da Vico, Prefect of Rome.⁷ The Vico family were hereditary Prefects. The Prefect controlled the administrative and judicial system of the City of Rome, although the office appears to have largely ceremonial by the thirteenth century.⁸ Giovanni is named as Prefect, and his arms are shown. He was hardly an exemplary person to be in control of the law, since having succeeded his father, he murdered his brother in 1338, and set up as tyrant in Viterbo. In 1347 Cola da Rienzi, himself a notary, deprived him of the prefecture of Rome and took the title himself by a decree of the Roman parliament, attacked Viterbo, and defeated Giovanni. Giovanni came to Rome, submitted to Cola, and received back the prefecture as his vassal. It is likely, but not certain, that Giovanni had a matrix engraved when he first assumed the office of Prefect in 1337, and that this object reflects that matrix. The object in Rawlinson's collection is a metal cast matrix (Rawlinson 105; Fig. 9.1–9.3)

made before 1708 and possibly earlier in the seventeenth century. It is not a medieval matrix. This metal cast matrix may have made cast from a wax seal or, less likely, a cast from a metal matrix. Whatever it was, is now lost, and we will never know. There is a second cast metal matrix in the University Library at Bologna.⁹

Since it is a cast metal matrix, this makes the detail of the design and inscriptions difficult to define exactly. The inscriptions refer to his name, Giovanni, the source of his authority from the Pope and Emperor, and the dignity of his role, which is aided by judges and words faithfully recorded by notaries. In the centre is the judicial figure of the Prefect, as a symbol or personification of *Iustitia*, seated on a bench with lions' heads. Beneath and on a smaller scale on either side are notaries with their inkpots and quills and judges with their books. His attributes are the sword of justice and a golden rose from the Pope. The seated figure with a sword recalls seated Kings or Emperors in judgement and majesty. The gold bull of Emperor Louis of Bavaria used in 1328 may be cited as a possible comparison.¹⁰

The design of this seal has been compared to the reverse of the City of London seal of before 1219 which shows St Thomas Becket, a Londoner, seated on the top of an arch above the city of London. At the two ends of the arch are two small groups of citizens kneeling in prayer. The legend reads 'Thomas, Do not cease protecting me (the city) who gave thee birth'. A source for this arrangement, and also for the organisation of the Prefect's seal, may be found in the iconography of the Last Judgement, where God the Father sits in judgement. The London seal, which T. A. Heslop suggests may have been the work of Master Walter de Ripa was described by him as 'one of the outstanding civic seals of medieval Europe'. Whether the early thirteenth-century London seal was known in Rome in the mid-fourteenth century is unknown. And if it was, why it came, if it did, to influence the design of Giovanni's seal is unclear.¹¹

Quentin Skinner has shown how the ideas underlying the paintings in Siena derive from the pre-humanist literature on city government, which stressed the need for justice to have full control of local feudatories and to have sufficient military strength available to enforce justice. Writers such as Giovanni da Viterbo



Fig. 9.4. Stone sculpture of the figure of *Iustitia* on the Doge's Palace, St Mark's Square, Venice (c. 1342–8).
© John Cherry.

and Bruno Latini frequently describe the power of government in elaborately symbolic images. City magistrates are instructed to deliver their judgements 'from a throne of glory'; to carry a sceptre 'in their strong right hand, with extended arm and to ensure that the sceptre itself 'is not like a reed, but strong and made of wood, like a shepherd's staff'. This reflects the way that Giovanni da Vico displays his attributes on his seal.

In the Siena paintings, Justice is shown with her balance held aloft by a winged figure of Wisdom, and one cord from each of its pans passes into the hands of Concord. She in turn entwines the cords to form a *vinculum cordiae*, which she hands to a procession of richly-clad citizens. Skinner also sees the figure on the northern wall as representing not so much the commune, but rather the type of *signoria* that the city needs to elect, if justice is to be pursued. While some aspects are specific to Siena, such as the letters C S C V (Commune Senarum, Civitatis Virginis) on his clothes, the representation of this regal figure, enthroned on a seat of judgement presents us with a secularised image of the Last Judgement.¹² Another parallel for the figure of Giovanni is the more contemporary representation of Justice on the Ducal palace, or, rather, the Palace of the Republic – palacium comunis – in Venice (Fig. 9.4), which may be dated between 1342 and 1348.¹³

Lastly, the figure of Giovanni/Justice may be compared with the earlier seated sculptural figure of Charles 1 of Anjou (1226–1285) by Arnolfo di Cambio (now in the Capitoline Museum Rome), which may be interpreted in a judicial sense since the ends of the throne on which Charles sits are decorated with lions.¹⁴ This fascinating and complex seal shows Giovanni, as a ruler in his law making capacity. Not for him was authentication by a notarial flourish, but by a large circular wax seal. The Prefect of Rome had nominated notaries since the administrative changes known as the '*renovatio senatus*' of 1144. Later notaries in Rome could be nominated by the Pope and by Counts Palatine on behalf of the Emperor. The seal of Giovanni de Vico has a curious connection with England, since at least six of the notaries, that Professor Christopher Cheney records as operating in England before 1320, use the same formula as appears on this seal, and were appointed by the Prefect of Rome – one of Giovanni's predecessors. Indeed the way in which they are styled suggest to Cheney that they had received their commission at the hands of the Prefect as representative of the Emperor. This may well be reflected by the comparison between the Prefect's seal and the Bull of Louis of Bavaria.¹⁵ His status as the personification of *Iustitia* in Rome is shown on a large scale. The lawyers who actually did the work are kept in their place as diminutive figures.

Seals of notaries

The notary authenticated documents in Italy with the sign or *signum*, often based on the cross and sometimes including the initials of the notary. Many such cases and documents, if they occurred north of the Alps, might well be sealed with a wax seal or the seals of those agreeing or witnessing the agreement. In Italy Bascapé comments that, although it was often held that notaries did not use wax seals, notaries certainly used metal bulls with their names before the ninth century. Furthermore seal matrices (for wax) for notaries occur from the late thirteenth century onwards (the copper-alloy seal of Henry Gratiadei in Bologna Museum appears to be the earliest).¹⁶ Bascapé divided notaries seals into six iconographic types – the heraldic, rebus, image of seated lawyer, with the notaries' sign

(tabellion), with a saint or other holy image and finally with a fantastic image.¹⁷ There are later documents sealed by notaries in wax notably in Barletta, on the Adriatic coast, between 1356 and 1382.¹⁸

Robert Brentano did not find it easy to draw any clear line of distinction between the use of the notary and the use of the wax seal, even in the more closely defined and relatively well-documented Italian bishoprics that he studied. Generally the notary drew up documents, but Brentano notes that some bishops produced documents, that were in no way notarial in style, but might be taken as letters patent.¹⁹ There are nine copper alloy seal matrices of Italian notaries in the Rawlinson collection (nos R4, R77, R92, R148, R182, R194, R296, R739, and R790. All appear to be Italian and are dated to the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries. Eight are probably genuine and the ninth (R790) appears to be a cast (of uncertain date) of a medieval seal. In addition there are two doubtful examples R92, R214. For details and illustrations of these see Appendix 9.2. Three have the signum as a central device (R173, R182, R739). They are the fifteenth-century seal of Giovanni Silvri of Spello, notary (R173), the fourteenth-century seal of Angeluccio Tinti, notary of an uncertain town (R182), and the fourteenth-century seal of Giovanni Thomasi, notary of Agnani (R739). Two are heraldic (R77 and R194). Heraldry may be an indication of social status and possibly the richness of some notaries. Robert Brentano notes that they were often men of property. Three of the four bronze matrices of notaries in the British Museum are heraldic, one puns on castles (Simon di Castello). The most notable is the fourteenth-century notary's seal of Guido Benvenuto in the British Museum.²⁰

Two seal matrices are 'decorative'. Bartolomeo of Veroli, notary, son of Giovanni of Sora, has a bird and bush (R4; Italian fourteenth century). This finely engraved seal shows a bird perched on a shrub, outside on the left hand side of its nest, feeding three young. Whether those notaries' seals that have a fish, flower or fleur de lis as their main device reflect the use of such a device in their *signa* is not clear to me. The second decorative seal is the fifteenth-century seal (R296) of Bartolomeo, Notary, of Benevento, in the Campania, which shows a mermaid holding up something in her right hand (possibly a fleur de lis), and in her left a mirror. It is an example of the fantastic type

of notary's seal.²¹ Mermaids clearly had an amuletic power, although they also represented the vices that led men astray. Perhaps here the mermaid represents the knowledge with which they tempted Odysseus – not carnal knowledge but wisdom, a vast new understanding of the world. Ovid called them '*doctae sirenes*' – skilled in song – but implying learned.²²

The use by a lawyer of a naked female image occurs later. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the naked female figure was seen as a personification of Truth. It appears thus in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia Roma* in 1603, and, in Richard Rawlinson's own collection, there is a brass seal matrix of an English notary called Abraham Fitter (R822). This displays a nearly naked figure of Veritas (Truth) whose well-curved flesh emphasises Abraham's motto *Veritas non quaerit angulos* ('There are no corners in Truth'). One of the notary's seals, possibly a cast, (R790) might best be described as 'the seated doctor' type. It may be compared with doctor's seal of Bertoluccio de Pretis, Doctor of Law, in the Rawlinson collection.

What were such notarial seals used for? They may, of course, have been made for purely personal use by the notary, and not used in the formal authentication of documents by the notary, who used his *signum* for that purpose. However, bronze seal matrices were widely used by notaries from the late thirteenth century, though the exact date beginning of their authenticating with a wax seal in Italy is not at all certain.²³ It may be that these matrices were only used in a personal capacity, and here the use of the term notary would have no greater signification for the authentication of documents than the seal of a merchant or craftsman.

Lastly, since judicial proceedings were usually recorded by notaries in Italy, the use of seals by judges is limited.²⁴ Judges used their seals to validate acts between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. The designs are those of judges sentencing, images of saints or the archangel St Michael. Judges in ecclesiastical courts were certainly assisted by notaries. There is an interesting question of how this use of seals of judges in Italy relates to the development north of the Alps for instance the development of seals of courts and the use of seals *ad causas*. It may be that seals of judges were only used in their personal capacity.

Conclusion

Ruth Wolff, in her study of the representation of St Francis of Assisi on medieval Italian seals, draws attention to the fact that Franciscans in Italy used both kinds of authentication in their documents – namely both sealing and endorsement though the official hand of the notary, testified by his signature and sign. She sees a distinction between the use of the seal by the general curia of the Order and its provincial government, and the convents, guardians, and vicars of the Order, who often used local notaries, even though they had the right to possess and use seals. It is this hierarchy of the use of the seal as opposed to the use of the notary that enables us to begin to comprehend the use of the seal by the notary in medieval Italy.

For instance Robert Brentano comments that 'The problem of sealing or notarising was obviously a bothersome one in the thirteenth-century [Italian] church', and in this he reflects earlier comments by Bascapé.²⁵ In Brentano's study of the seals of the archbishops of Amalfi in the south of Italy, he comments that the archbishop used a wax seal in 1274, but thereafter sealed in lead until the end of the fifteenth century. The archbishops used notaries and Brentano comments that unsealed instruments were very similar to sealed *acta*. Giorgio Cencetti, in his study of Bolognese seals, suggests that wax seals were mainly used for letters, schedules, witness statements, judicial and medical opinions, while private agreements were notarised.²⁶ He distinguished between a more public use of the wax seal and a private use of the notarised document. By the end of the fifteenth century in Florence on 27 July 1491 a codicil to a will is sealed by seven witnesses and a notary, Andreas Antonii, who authenticates both with his *signum* (*me cum solito signo subscripsi*) and also his wax seal (*sigillum meum.... in quo sigillo meo scultum est caput et sue vultus cuiusdam hominis cum litteris circumcirca ...*).

His wax seal might have been produced by a metal seal matrix or by a signet ring. Rings, which belonged to notaries and which could be used for sealing, are known from the fourteenth century.²⁷ So here the notary was using both methods of authentication.

Dual use of seal and sign occurs in some peripheral parts of Italy. In the north-east of Italy, the two systems of the notary drawing up

the document and then authenticating it with a wax seal functioned at the same time. Reinhard Härtel draws attention to this in dealing with the difference between the more Germanic customs in the region of Carinthia with the Italian customs in Friuli and Aquileia.²⁸ Harald Toniatti notes that the same dual use of notary's tabellion and wax seal also occurs in the Bishopric of Bressanone.²⁹ It is clear that variations in use were present in different parts of Italy.

Also it is possible that different approaches existed in the secular and commercial world in Italy as opposed to the religious. This distinction between may be hinted at by the division of sealed and notarised documents in the picture of George Gisze of Danzig (1497–1562) one of the leading merchants in the London Hanseatic Steinhof. He was a member of a Cologne family that had settled in Danzig. In the picture by Hans Holbein the Younger (1497–1543), he is depicted with his bills carefully filed by his left shoulder, dividing the sealed on our left from the notarised on our right. Holbein may have divided them up for visual effect, but it is more likely that the division had some significance.³⁰ All that can be concluded is that, at present, it is clear that the borderline between sealing and notarising fluctuated from place to place, from time to time, and may well have depended on the type of document to be sealed or notarised. The problem of sealing as opposed to, or, in addition to, notarising remains. It demonstrates how the use, or, rather the non-use, of seals reflects both varied culture and diplomatic usage.

Notes

- 1 My thanks to Professor Phillipp Schofield and Dr Elizabeth New for the invitation to attend the conference at Aberystwyth in April 2013, where this paper was delivered, to Professor Julian Gardner for reading a draft and for help with the seal of Giovanni, to Adrian Ailes for advice on notaries, and Professor Caroline Barron for drawing my attention to the similarity in design between the seal of Giovanni de Vico and the reverse of the City of London seal.
- 2 The text of Otto's statement at the Council of London is printed in *Councils and Synods with other Documents relating to the English Church*, II AD. 1205–1313, Part I, 1205–1265, eds F. M. Powicke and C. R. Cheney (Oxford, 1964) pp. 245–59: no. 28, Council of Legate at St Paul's in London 18–20 or 19–21 November 1237 III Canons of the Council, at pp. 257–58, *Quoniam tabellionum usus in regno Anglie non habetur, propter quod magis ad sigilla recurri autentica est necesse, ut eorum copia facilius habeatur, statuimus ut sigillum habeant non solum archiepiscopi et episcopi, set (*) etiam eorum officiales, item abbates, priores, decani, archidiaconi et eorum officiales, decani rurales, necnon ecclesiarum cathedralium capitula et cetera queque collegia et conventus simul cum suis rectoribus aut divisim iuxta eorum consuetudinem vel statutum.*
- 3 C. R. Cheney, *Notaries Public in England in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth centuries* (Oxford, 1972), p. 135.
- 4 A good introduction to the work of notaries is the section 'Notaries' (pp. 394–406) in J. A. Brundage, *The Medieval Origins of the Legal Profession* (Chicago, 2008). An account of notaries is given by T. F. Tout in *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England: the Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seals* (Manchester, 1920), pp. 121–3. I am grateful to Adrian Ailes for this reference. A succinct account of the introduction of notaries into England is given by J. A. Sayers, 'The influence of Papal documents on English documents before 1305', in *Papsturkunde und europäisches Urkundenwesen*, eds P. Herde und H. Jacobs (Cologne, 1999), pp. 161–99, esp. pp. 169–70. The best guide to Italian notaries is A. Petrucci, *Notarii: Documenti per la storia del notariato italiano* (Milano, 1958), particularly the introduction 'Il notariato italiano dalle origine al secolo 14', pp. 1–44.
- 5 M. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 241–6.
- 6 A. Lermer, 'Besiegelung des Rathauses. Der Veneçia – Tondo am Dogenpalast in Venedig' in *Die Bildlichkeit Korporativer Siegel im Mittelalter*, ed. M. Spaeth (Cologne 2009) p. 140, n. 34, who quotes Bascapè, vol. 1, S 186 ff. and 245 and 253; also S 248 abb. 6–14 and S 256f. See also M. Rosada, 'Sigillum Sancti Marci' Bolle e sigilli di Venezia' in *Il sigillo nella storia e nella cultura*, ed. S. Ricci (1985), pp. 109–48.
- 7 A catalogue (printed and online) of the Rawlinson collection is in preparation and is hoped to be published in 2015. For a detailed description of the seal matrix and a draft catalogue entry see Appendix 9.1 below.
- 8 The early history of the Prefects up to 1252 is considered in L. Halphen, *Études sur l'administration de Rome au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1907). Also, R. Brentano, *Rome before Avignon*, (California, 1990), p. 117.
- 9 The type of loop handle on R105 is more appropriate to a thirteenth-century matrix than to a mid-fourteenth-century example,

- suggesting that the cast now in the Rawlinson collection was copied from a seal impression rather than the actual matrix.
- 10 O. Posse, *Die Siegel der deutschen Kaiser und Könige von 751 bis 1806*, 5 Bd (Dresden, 1909–13), Bd. 1 taf. 47–1, 47–3, taf. 50–7.
 - 11 The London seal is illustrated in G. Pedrick, *Borough Seals of the Gothic Period* (London, 1904), pl. xi. For a discussion of this seal see T. A. Heslop in *Age of Chivalry* (London, 1987), no. 193, p. 273, and also E. New, 'Seals and Status in Medieval English Towns: A case study of London, Newcastle and Durham' in *Good Impressions: Image and Authority*, eds N. Adams, J. Cherry and J. Robinson, (London, 2008), pp. 35–41. I am most grateful to Professor Caroline Barron for drawing my attention to this similarity, and to Professor Julian Gardner for suggesting the source of the design in the iconography of the Last Judgement. This idea needs further work in terms of Last Judgement paintings and sculpture in Rome.
 - 12 For the paintings in the Siena Palazzo Comunale see N. Rubinstein, 'Political ideas in Sienese art: the frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and Taddeo di Bartolo in the Palazzo Pubblico' *Journal of the Courtauld and Warburg Institutes* 21 (1958), 179–207. Q. Skinner, 'Ambrogio Lorenzetti: the artist as political philosopher,' *Proceedings of the British Academy* 72 (1986), 1–56. Q. Skinner, 'Ambrogio Lorenzetti's "Buon Governo" Frescoes: Two Old Questions, Two New Answers,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 62 (1999), 1–28.
 - 13 A. Lermer, 'Besiegelung des Rathauses: Der Venedig – Tondo am Dogenpalast in Venedig' in M. Spaeth (ed.), *Die Bildlichkeit Korporativer Siegel im Mittelalter* (Cologne, 2009), pp. 131–48.
 - 14 J. Gardner, 'Likeness and/or Representation in English and French Royal Portraits c. 1250–c.1300' in M. Büchsel and P. Schmidt (eds), *Das Porträt vor der Erfindung der Portraits* (Mainz, 2003), pp. 141–51, esp. pp. 146–7 and Abb. 7.
 - 15 Cheney *Notaries Public*, pp. 84–5.
 - 16 G. C. Bascapé, *Sigillografia – Il sigillo nella diplomatica, nel diritto, nella storia, nell'arte* Vol 1 (Milan, 1969), pp. 359–77. G. Cencetti, *Sigilli Medievali Italiani del museo civico di Bologna*, (Bologna, 1953), no. 2, p. 12.
 - 17 Bascapé, *Sigillografia*, vol. 1, pp 372–5.
 - 18 Bascapé, *Sigillografia* pp. 359–60.
 - 19 R. Brentano, *Two churches: England and Italy in the thirteenth century* (London, 1988), pp. 251–324 (chap. v), especially p. 302.
 - 20 R. Brentano, *Rome before Avignon*, p. 50. The four in the BM are Nicolai Panfilus (P and E 1880,0501.22 with a monogram), Simon di Castello (P and E 1876,1017.65), Guido Benvenuto (P and E 1923,1207.7) and Albert Milani (P and E 1876,1017.64).
 - 21 Bascapé, *Sigillografia*, vol. 1, p. 375.
 - 22 Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 5.555. See also A. Luchs, *The Mermaids of Venice: fantastic sea creatures in Venetian Renaissance art* (London, 2010).
 - 23 Bascapé *Sigillografia*, vol 1, pp. 375–6. His source is C. Paoli, *Diplomatica* (Florence, 1942) p. 251, fn. 4.
 - 24 Bascapé, *Sigillografia*, p. 377.
 - 25 Brentano, *Two churches*, p. 16.
 - 26 Brentano, *Two churches*, p. 311; Cencetti, *Sigilli Medievali Italiani*, p. 5.
 - 27 C. C. Oman, *Catalogue of Rings* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1930), no. 580: silver, set with a classical intaglio, and dated to the fourteenth century. The ring of Peter of Canius, notary, also Italian, fourteenth century, is in a private collection.
 - 28 R. Härtel, 'Il notariato fra Alpi e Adriatico', *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato* 60 (2000), 9–26.
 - 29 H. Toniatti, 'Con Signum e Sigillo: L'instrumentum notarile sigillato quale forma documentaria mista nell'ambito del vescovado di Bressanone' in exhibition catalogue *Sigilli e Potere*, ed. A. Zaccaria (2002), at the Archivio di Stato di Bolzano.
 - 30 Gemäldegalerie Berlin no. 586. This picture and other portraits of merchants, sometimes with seals, are discussed by B. S. Yamey, *Art and Accounting* (Yale, 1989). Gisze is discussed on p. 24.

Appendix 9.1. The seal of Giovanni de Vico (R105)

Giovanni Vico, Prefect of Rome. Italian, after 1337 and before 1348. Bronze, circular 94 mm diameter.

Inscription

Outer circle + HOHIS [sic] DEI : GRA : ALME : URB : PREFECTUS : CESARI : ABSETE : SUMI : POTIFICIS : DUCTOR

[John, by the grace of God, leader in the absence of the Pope of the City and prefect of Caesar]

Inner circle (on two scrolls, with pearly borders)

(Begins at bottom left of seal) IMPERII : SACRI : IUSTICIE : QINCRO (recommences at bottom right, and faces outwards) ANNU?MP? PAPALE MUNUS AUREA ROSA

[The sacred rule of justice is given every five years by the gift of a Papal rose]

Across centre of seal, within beaded borders, S P(line above)FECTORIE / DIGNITATIS

[The dignity of the Prefect]

DICTA IPS FIDELIT SCRIBIT / IUSTE IUD(ligate)ICAT(ligature and line above)

[Words are faithfully written/ justly judged]

In scrolls with pearly borders underneath central scene and divided by the shield

NOTARII / IUDICES

[Notaries/Judges]

All Lombardic. The outer inscription has on its outside an elaborate border with toothed inner side, and a pearly border above the letters the same combination of borders is repeated inside the outer inscription.

Description

A figure, seated on a stool, decorated with two lions' (or dogs') heads and claws, holding in the right hand a sword point upwards and, in the left, a Rose, with two tiers of petals, by the stalk. The seated figure has a band around the head, a cloak linked at the breast by a brooch and a belt with crosses.

On the ledge, upon which rest the figure's feet, is an inkpot open with pen by the right

foot, with two notaries kneeling facing towards the pot, with an identifying inscription beneath. By the left foot, is a book, by which two judges kneel facing towards the book and with an identifying inscription beneath them. Between the two words is a heater-shaped shield: *An eagle displayed, head facing left, with six pellets in the field.*

Giovanni

This is the seal of Giovanni da Vico, Prefect of Rome. The arms (*an eagle displayed, head facing left, with six pellets in the field*) are those of Vico.¹

The Prefects of Rome

Giovanni III who was Prefect of Rome from at least 1337 to 1365 is the one who used this seal. In 1348 he was entitled as appears on this seal.²

He succeeded his father in the Prefecture, murdered his brother in 1338, and set up as tyrant in Viterbo. In 1347 Cola da Rienzi deprived him of the Prefecture and assumed the title of Prefect by a decree of the Roman parliament. Cola attacked Viterbo, defeated Giovanni, who came to Rome submitted himself to Cola and received the prefecture as his vassal. The matrix for wax seal from which this metal cast was taken may have been engraved in 1337, but if Giovanni had two matrices in succession (see below) even this is uncertain.

According to Calisse, Giovanni used this seal up to 1348 since he used it on an agreement of the 17 July 1348 concerning the 'castello di Carcari dai Normani di Roma'. Calisse also notes that Giovanni, in 1354 'in un trattato di accordo con Legato, fatto con solenne istrumento, pose il proprio sigillo accanto a quello di Legato'.³

The seal

A seal of Giovanni was published by Silvester Pietra Sancta in 1638 and over 100 years later by Francesco Vettori. This seal has differences to R105 in that there are three figures on each side instead of two, differences in the position of the inscriptions and the design of the Papal rose. This may mean that the draughtsman of Pietra Sancta made errors, or that there were two different seals. Pietra Santa said that he had given it to D. Taddeo Barberini, who was created the last Prefect of Rome and whose portrait appears on the title page of his book.⁴

The seal of Giovanni was also noted by Feliciano Bussi in 1742. He quotes the

description by Abate Francesco Valesio, which is presumably the written description in Valesio's catalogue (now Rawlinson MS I 907). Since Rawlinson brought Valesio's catalogue with him to England in 1726, Bussi must have seen the catalogue before Rawlinson acquired the Lorenzani collection in 1721 (unless there was another copy of the catalogue).⁵

The best modern discussion of this seal is by Enea Gualandi in 1904. He refers to the cast now possessed by the University Library of Bologna. This is accompanied by

an anonymous note describing the seal, which Gualandi thought was written by the Bolognese Canon Giacomo Amadei, (who died in 1768). At the end of this quotation, the unknown writer, perhaps Amadei, comments: 'The original seal fell into the hands of Francesco Valesio: he made a cast of it *'egli ne fece tirare il Gesso, sul quale poi fece gettare in metallo questo nostro esemplare'*, (from this metal cast, he made our example), which was sold after his death in the sale of many antiquities already possessed by that most notable man.'⁶

Appendix 9.2. Notaries seals in the Rawlinson collection

R4. (Fig. 9.5) Bartolomeo of Veroli, notary, son of Giovanni of Sora.

Italian, 14th century.

Bronze. P 45 × 29 mm.

Legend: + S : BARTH'OI · NOT(line above) · D' VERL' · NATI · IOH'IS · D'SORA.

In Lombardic script with pearled borders

This finely engraved seal shows a bird perched on a shrub, outside on the left hand side of its nest, feeding three young. The pelican feeding three young was sometime seen as an image of the Trinity.



Fig. 9.5. a) Matrix of the seal of Bartolomeo of Veroli, (Italian, fourteenth century), bronze, 45 × 29 mm, Ashmolean Museum: R4. © photo: John Cherry. Object: Ashmolean Museum; b) impression from the matrix (c. 2003), plaster, © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

R77. (Fig. 9.6) Ribaldo Paulutio, Notary. Italian, thirteenth or fourteenth century. Bronze. Diam. 26 mm.

Legend: + S RIBALDI : PAULATII · NOT. In Lombardic script with pearled borders.

A heater-shaped shield: *Three chevronels, on a chief (which partly conceals the upper chevronel) two lions passant respectant.* The spaces between the shield and the inner line of the legend space are decorated with fronds. The Italian form of the surname may be Paluzzi. There is a cast in the British Library no. clxxxix.27 from the collection of Dr Kathleen M. L. Hall of Oxford.



Fig. 9.6. Matrix of the seal of Ribaldo Paulutio, (Italian, thirteenth or fourteenth century), bronze, diameter 26mm. Ashmolean Museum: R77 © photo: John Cherry. Object: Ashmolean Museum; b) impression from the matrix (c. 2003), plaster. © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

R92. (Fig. 9.7) Piccolo Bonabonti Ro? Italian, fourteenth century. Bronze. Diam. 28 mm. Legend: + S PICOLO BONABONTI · RO. Lombardic with plain (slight) borders. The inscription is difficult to read.

A round-based shield: *chevronelly reversed of six*. Beside and above the shield, branches. RO may be an abbreviation for Rogator, a notary or attorney? If this is a notary's seal, it is of the heraldic type.



Fig. 9.7. Matrix of the seal of Piccolo Bonabonti Ro? (Italian, fourteenth century), bronze, diameter 28 mm. Ashmolean Museum: R92. © John Cherry. Object: Ashmolean Museum; b) impression from the matrix, plaster, (c. 2003). © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

R148. (Fig. 9.8) Bernardo Salvi, Notary. Italian, thirteenth or fourteenth century. Bronze. Triangular matrix 29 × 27 mm. Legend: + · S · BERNARDINI · SALVI NOT(line above) ·. Lombardic Plain borders (line above) T. Lombardic with pearly borders.

A triangular shield: *Barry of seven, with a chief*.



Fig. 9.8. Matrix of the seal of Bernardo Salvi, (Italian, thirteenth or fourteenth century), Ashmolean Museum: R148. © John Cherry. Object: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; b) impression from the matrix, dental wax (c. 2003). © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

R182. (Fig. 9.9) Angeluccio Tinti, Notary. Italian, fourteenth century. Bronze. Diam. 24 mm. Legend: + S ANGLOTHI : TINI : NOT. Lombardic with pearly borders.

The field of the seal is occupied by a notary's signum with a cross at the centre.

Fig. 9.9. Matrix of the seal of Angeluccio Tinti, (Italian, fourteenth century), bronze, diameter 24 mm Ashmolean Museum: R182. © John Cherry. Object: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; b) impression from the matrix, plaster (c. 2003). © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



Fig. 9.10. *Matrix of the seal of Ugucione Prandi (Italian, possibly fourteenth century), bronze, diameter 30 mm. Ashmolean Museum: R194. © John Cherry. Object: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; b) impression from the matrix, dental wax (c. 2003). © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.*

R194. (Fig. 9.10) Heraldic. PRANDI, Ugucione, Notary. Italian, possibly fourteenth century. Bronze. Diam. 30 mm. Legend: + · S · UGUCIONIS · PRANDI NOTAR(ligate)II. Lombardic. Pearled borders. *A lion rampant contourny*

It is possibly a charge from the arms of Prandi of Verona, or alternatively the crest of the Prandi of Piedmont used as a badge.



R214. (Fig. 9.11) Uncertain whether this is really a notary. SCLAVUM, John of, Notary? Italian, fourteenth century. Bronze. Diam. 23 mm. Legend: * S : NO(line above)T · IOH'IS D' SCLAVO. Lombardian. Plain borders. *A bush, which appears to grow into a cross.*

A bar over the O of NOT suggests that this may be a contraction, hence the identification of the profession as a notary is tentative, though the title of notary usually comes after. Scavo appears to represent a place name, but this has not been identified. Schiavon, near Vicenza, and Scavons, near Pordenone, are possible. Certainly Schiavo/Schiavone is a very common name in the Veneto.



Fig. 9.11. *Matrix of the seal of John of Scavum (Italian, fourteenth century), bronze, diameter 23 mm. Ashmolean Museum: R214. © John Cherry. Object: Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; b) impression from the matrix, dental wax (c. 2003). © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.*

R296. (Fig. 9.12) BARTOLOMEO, Notary, of Benevento.
Italian, possibly fifteenth century.
Bronze. Diam. c. 25 mm
Legend: + S BARTH(line above)I NOT(line above) BENEVENT(line above). Lombardian caps. Plain borders.

A mermaid holding up in her right hand a flower, possibly a fleur de lis, and in her left a mirror. Benevento is in the Campania.



Fig. 9.12. Matrix of the seal of Bartolomeo of Benevento, (Italian, possibly fifteenth century), bronze, diameter 25 mm. Ashmolean Museum: R296. © photo: John Cherry, Object Ashmolean Museum. b) Impression from the matrix, dental wax (c. 2003), © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

R739. (Fig. 9.13)
Probably Italian, probably fourteenth century.
Bronze matrix in the shape of a round-based shield. 27 × 23 mm.
Legend: + S IOHIS THOMI NOT DE ANAGN. Lombardian caps. Plain borders.

A tabellionato, the cross at the top carried up into the legend space to mark the beginning of the inscription.

The matrix is corroded and so the legend is not at all clear. The use of the shield-shaped matrix is interesting, since this more commonly occurs with heraldic devices. Julian Gardner suggests that Cardinal Giacomo Caetani Tommasi of Anagni, a nephew of Boniface VIII, must be a kinsman of Giovanni Thomasi. For the Cardinal and his family see L. Boyle, 'An Ambry (*sic*) of 1299 at San Clemente', L. E. Boyle, E. Kane, F. Guidobaldi, *San Clemente Miscellany*, ed. L. Dempsey OP, II, Rome 1978, pp. 36–59.



Fig. 9.13. Matrix of the seal of John Thomas of Anagni (Italian, probably fourteenth century), bronze 27 × 23 mm. Ashmolean Museum: R739.

© John Cherry. Object Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; b) impression from the matrix, dental wax (c. 2003). © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Fig. 9.14. *Matrix of the seal of Philip, notary (Italian, probably fifteenth century), bronze 36 × 24 mm. Ashmolean Museum: R790. © John Cherry. Object Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; b) impression from the matrix, dental wax (c. 2003). © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.*

R790. (Fig. 9.14)

A cast. Probably Italian, probably fifteenth century.

Bronze. P 36 × 24 mm.

Legend: + S PHIL NOTARII. Lombardian No borders.

A man seated, facing left, with a single-legged portable table before him.

The inscription is very faint because the seal is so worn. I suspect that it was a cast. It is an example of the 'doctor's' type, unusual for notaries, for which see Bascapé, *Sigillografia I*, p. 373.



R822. (Fig. 9.15) ABRAHAM FITTER, Notary public of London

English, early eighteenth century.

Probably brass rather than bronze. diam. c. 35 mm. Thickness 8 mm.

Legend: SIG : ABRA : FITTER · NOT : PUB : LON : Ren caps. Starts at bottom left and ends at bottom right. Plain borders.

The allegorical figure of 'Nuda Veritas' standing, with one foot on clouds, the other on a globe, balancing in her raised right hand a sphere, and



Fig. 9.15 *Matrix of the seal of Abraham Fitter (English, early eighteenth century), Probably brass, diameter 35 mm. Ashmolean Museum: R822. © John Cherry. Object Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; b) impression from the matrix, dental wax (c. 2003). © Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.*

holding in her left hand an open book. Around the type, in small letters, VERITAS NON – QUAERIT ANGULOS. (There is no hole and corner work about this attorney).

Abraham Fitter, born in the diocese of London about 1688, was admitted notary Public on 22 February, 1716; at that time he was living and working at the Royal Exchange in London.⁷ The figure of Nuda Veritas is a personification of a passage in Horace.⁸

Notes

- 1 The arms by this time may have become those of the hereditary prefect of Rome rather than the family. The tomb of an ancestor of the Prefect – Pietro di Vico – is (now) in San Francesco Viterbo – originally in S. Maria in Gradi. Jörg Garms *et al.*, *Die mittelalterlichen Grabmäler in Rom und Latium von 13. bis 15. Jahrhundert*, (Publikationen des Österreichischen Kulturinstituts in Rom, II, Abteilung, Quellen 5. Reihe I, 2. Die Monumentalgräber (Rome/Vienna 1994), No. 82 pp. 217–21 & Abb. 269–72. The Prefects had their own Roman church S. Niccolò dei Prefetti. I owe this reference

- to Professor Julian Gardner. For the Golden Rose see Elisabeth Cornides, *Rose und Schwert im päpstlichen Zeremoniell. Von den Anfängen bis zum Pontifikat Gregors XIII. Phil. Diss.* Vienna 1967 (Copy in Warburg Institute).
- 2 For the prefects of Rome see C. Calisse, 'I Prefetti di Vico' *Archivio Storico della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, 10 (1887), 80.
- 3 Calisse, 'I Prefetti' p. 117.
- 4 Silvester Pietra Sancta, *Tesserae Gentilitiae*, Rome (1638) p. 656, and Francesco Vettori, *Il fiorino d'oro illustrato*, Firenze (1738) p. 129.
- 5 Feliciano Bussi, *Istoria della città di Viterbo* (Rome, 1742) p. opposite 201.
- 6 Enea Gualandi 'Il sigillo di Giovanni da Vico', *Rivista del Collegio Araldico*, 2, (1904) pp. 356–68, esp. p. 358.
- 7 Faculty Office records at Lambeth Palace Library see Hough correspondence (letter dated 10 July 1991).
- 8 This is from Horace *Ode*, I, xxiv, 7. The whole passage of the *Ode to Quintilius* is *Cui Pudor et Iustitiae soror, incorrupta Fides, nudaque Veritas quando ullum inueniet parem?*

When will Honour, and unswerving Loyalty,
that is sister to Justice, and our naked Truth,
ever discover his equal?

Family identity: the seals of the Longespées

Brian Kemp

The Longespées were an important and high-born family in thirteenth-century England.¹ They have been described in recent years as being ‘amongst the greatest in the land and exceptionally well connected’.² They were closely related to the ruling members of the English royal family. Indeed, they were members of the royal family itself, the founder of the line being the illegitimate son of Henry II, William Longespée, who married Ela, the heiress of the earldom of Salisbury, and became earl of Salisbury himself, dying in 1226. His wife was the founder after his death of Lacock Abbey (Wiltshire), of which house she became the first abbess in 1239, an office she resigned in 1257, to die in 1261.³ This William was half-brother to Kings Richard I and John, his sons and daughters were cousins (or half-cousins) to Henry III, and his grandchildren were second cousins of Edward I, that king, for example, referring to Nicholas Longespée in 1292 as *consanguineus noster dilectus*.⁴ They all had the royal blood of Henry II flowing in their veins and, as we shall see, were immensely proud of their inheritance. William, the earl of Salisbury, and his wife, Ela, produced a prolific progeny. Their eldest son, William (William Longespée II), was a conspicuous crusader, being eventually killed at Mansurah on Louis IX’s crusade in 1250.⁵ Another son, Stephen, served Henry III as seneschal of Gascony from 1254 and became justiciar of Ireland in 1258, which office he retained until his death in 1260,⁶ and the youngest son, Nicholas, was

elected and consecrated bishop of Salisbury in 1292 and died in 1297.⁷ Nicholas was outlived by the most remarkable of the couple’s daughters, Ela, who married first Thomas, earl of Warwick (d. 1242), and secondly, in about 1255, Philip Basset, Henry III’s justiciar in 1261–63, after whose death in 1271 she remained a wealthy, childless widow until her own death in 1298.⁸ Other notable members of the family appeared in its many junior or collateral branches.

The aim of this paper is, on the basis of the identifiable seals of members of the family, male and female – whether the seals survive as originals, casts or drawings – to investigate and illustrate how different individuals made use of various elements in the family’s repertoire of heraldic arms and symbols to identify themselves as members of the Longespée family and at the same time mark their own individual identity. We are concerned here primarily with two things: the symbolism arising from the family name, on the one hand, and the family arms, on the other, since both spawned a variety of iconographic consequences, either on their own or in combination.

The family name is usually given in its French form, in some variation of Longespée or Lungespée, the form that is often used even in Latin charters and other texts, but it could be rendered in Latin, particularly down to the twelfth century, as ‘Longa spata’ or ‘Longe spate’, a form used also in the thirteenth

century by the St Albans chronicler, Matthew Paris; and, of course, in modern times it has also been rendered as Longsword.⁹ The name first occurs early in the history of the Duchy of Normandy, having been borne by the successor of Rollo, the first duke, William, who died in 942. It presumably passed subsequently down the ducal line of Normandy, although evidence of its use is lacking, and then, with the Empress Matilda's marriage to Geoffrey, count of Anjou, in 1128, it came to the house of Anjou, from which it passed to the ruling house of England with the succession of Geoffrey's eldest son as Henry II of England in 1154.¹⁰ Geoffrey's second son, William, Henry's brother, is usually called by historians William Fitz Empress, and that is what he is called on his seal (*Willelmus filius Imperatricis*), but in his own charters he is called 'William brother of the king', and at least once, in a slightly later charter by his nephew, the Young King, he is referred to as William Longespée.¹¹ Moreover, in a considerably later set of monastic annals, those of Osney Abbey, we find him called *W. Longespeie frater regis Henrici secundi*.¹² With his death without offspring in 1164, however, the name is lost to view until it reappears as the name of Henry II's illegitimate son, William, whom we have already met. As a family name, it is doubtful whether it signified that this William possessed or used a particularly long sword, but the name might well have been applied to Rollo's son in the early tenth century because he did use such a sword, and the name stuck to his descendants. It is certainly interesting in this context that the funerary plaque of Geoffrey, count of Anjou, to which we must soon turn, and which is more frequently discussed in the context of the Longespée arms, depicts the count holding up, almost brandishing, a prominent and quite long sword. At any rate, after the adoption of the name by William, earl of Salisbury, and his family in the thirteenth century, representations of the long sword form an important element in the iconography of the family's seals.

The family's heraldic arms can be traced back to the later years of Henry I's reign, although the precise form in which they have come down to us was probably not settled until around the middle of the twelfth century. As is well known, they have their origins in the year 1128, in the charges of a shield given by Henry

I to Geoffrey, count of Anjou, on the occasion of the latter's knighting by the king shortly before his marriage to Henry's only daughter and heir, Matilda, widow of the emperor Henry V of Germany, the Empress Matilda.¹³ The chronicler, John of Marmoutier, records that at his knighting Geoffrey received from the king, among other equipment and insignia, a shield bearing symbolic golden lioncels (or little lions), which was hung about his neck (*clipeus, leunculos aureos ymaginarios habens, collo eius suspenditur*).¹⁴ As Adrian Ailes has reminded us, the exact number of lioncels (or, indeed, of any multiple charges on a shield) was at this date not an important consideration, and no number is specified in John of Marmoutier's account, nor is the ground colour of the shield given, but both these matters had evidently been settled by the time of Geoffrey's death in 1151.¹⁵ Soon after that, probably in the late 1150s, the celebrated funerary plaque of enamel depicting the count was produced to hang above his tomb in Le Mans cathedral.

Miraculously, it has survived, and shows the count standing, holding up a long sword (as mentioned earlier) and bearing on his left arm a pointed shield, not fully visible but evidently bearing six golden lioncels rampant on a blue ground in the formation 3-2-1.¹⁶ It was precisely these arms that were to be carved and painted on the shield worn by the effigy in Salisbury cathedral of his illegitimate grandson, William Longespée, earl of Salisbury (d. 1226), to whom they must have descended via King Henry II of England.¹⁷ These arms were not those borne by his uncle, William, brother of Henry II, which comprised a single lion rampant, even though, as we have seen, William possessed the cognomen 'Longespée'.¹⁸ After Geoffrey of Anjou's death the arms seem to have been dormant, as it were, in his descendants' possession until conferred (presumably) by Henry II on his illegitimate son, William. Incidentally, William's monument and effigy at Salisbury are justly celebrated as among the earliest and finest military examples in the whole of England; and the lioncels on the shield do have a striking resemblance to those of Geoffrey's funerary plaque.¹⁹

With these preliminaries concluded, we can turn to my main theme. This is far from virgin territory and the Longespées have exerted a fascination on a number of antiquarians and scholars. In particular, The Revd William L. Bowles (1762–1850), vicar of Bremhill

(Wiltshire), who, among his various talents, had a certain skill as an antiquarian, produced, in 1835 with J. G. Nichols, a book entitled *Annals and Antiquities of Lacock Abbey in the County of Wilts*, a work which contains a large amount of detailed history on the Longespée family in the thirteenth century. Even more to my purpose the volume includes four plates of drawings of Longespée family seals coming down to the mid-fourteenth century.²⁰ The marvellous seventeenth-century heraldic and antiquarian manuscript, known as *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals*, now in the Northamptonshire Record Office, is also a fine primary source, for example, for the appearance of the complete seal of Countess Ela of Salisbury.²¹

I propose first to consider the seals of William Longespée, earl of Salisbury (d. 1226), and Ela, his countess, and then the surviving seals of their immediate offspring, namely, three of the sons and one of the daughters. The only surviving seal of the father is a rather fragmentary example in the archives of Winchester College Archives on a deed of 1215–26, very precious and preserving important details of the obverse and most of the counterseal.²² Fortunately, a drawing of a complete seal is included in Bowles and Nichols, plate I, and a plaster cast of an imperfect original is in the British Library, dated to 1219; both reveal, with the seal at Winchester, the only known example, among all the male members of the family, of a circular equestrian seal with the earl galloping to the dexter (that is, to the viewer's left), brandishing a sword and displaying on his left arm an heraldic shield charged with six lioncels, as represented on his grandfather's plaque and on his own monumental effigy, and, for good measure, single lions on the front and back of the horse's caparison. The legend (lost from the original, but given in full in Bowles and Nichols) reads: + SIGILL' WILL'I: LONGESPEIE: COMITIS: DE: SALESBERI (Fig. 10.1).²³

The known dating range for the use of this seal is the period 1215–26, but it is clear, from a drawing (?c. 1700) by the French antiquarian, Roger Gaignières, of a now lost seal, that the earl used earlier another seal of generally similar design but with the rider's shield charged with a single lion rampant. This seal was attached to a deed which can be dated to 1198 × 1205.²⁴ It seems probable, therefore, that the earl's first



Fig. 10.1. Seal of William Longespée I, earl of Salisbury, d. 1226 (Winchester College Archives, no. 9022; Bowles and Nichols, pl. i).



Fig. 10.2. Counterseal of William Longespée, earl of Salisbury (Winchester College Archives, no. 9022; Bowles and Nichols, pl. i).

seal, with a shield of one lion rampant, was superseded in the first or second decade of the thirteenth century by the one more familiar to us, with the shield charged with six lioncels. The original at Winchester, the cast in the British Library, and the two drawings all include a circular counterseal, depicting the image of a sheathed sword pointing downwards and a baldric, with the legend: SIG' [or SIGILL'] WILL' MI. LONGESPEIE (Fig. 10.2).

The seal of the countess is also known only from one, now damaged example, but, again fortunately, a seventeenth-century drawing of the complete seal survives, as noted earlier, in *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals*, with another from the early nineteenth century in Bowles and Nichols, which is slightly more accurate as regards the counterseal.²⁵ Ela is depicted



Fig. 10.3. Seal of Ela, countess of Salisbury, d. 1261 (BL, Harley Ch. 53 B. 12; Bowles and Nichols, pl. iv).



Fig. 10.4. Counterseal of Ela, countess of Salisbury (BL, Harley Ch. 53 B. 12; Bowles and Nichols, pl. iv).

on the obverse as a noble-woman, standing frontally and holding on her left wrist a bird of prey, which intrudes into the legend, while on either side of her is a single lioncel (derived from her husband's arms) facing outwards to the legend and looking back at her; the legend reads: + SIGILLVM. ELE COMITISSE. SARESBERIE (Fig. 10.3). The counterseal is her *secretum*, rather unusually in the shape of a shield, and bearing the Longespée arms and the legend, + SECRETVM. ELE COMITISSE. SARESBERIE (Fig. 10.4).

William Longespée II, the couple's eldest son, succeeded eventually to the Salisbury



Fig. 10.5. Seal and counterseal of William Longespée II, d. 1250 (Berkshire Rec. Off., D/Q1 T13/11).

estates in 1238, but did not receive the title of earl, and this may have been partly the reason why he did not have a large equestrian seal, but a rather smaller circular seal heavily charged with Longespée motifs. The relative modesty of his seal may appear rather surprising, given his royal connections, though it may have been devised early in his career, before he acquired the estates, and was not subsequently altered. In the event, it set something of a precedent for other male members of the family, and after William the earl, no male member of the family was actually depicted on his seal apart from Nicholas, bishop of Salisbury, whose seal belongs, of course, to a different tradition of sigillographic iconography. A handful of William II's seals and counterseals survive, in varying degrees of completeness (Fig. 10.5).

The obverse depicts the familiar Longespée shield of arms on a plain ground, with the legend: + SIGILLVM. WILLELMI. LVNGESPEIE (reconstructed from two incomplete specimens); the counterseal is William's *secretum*, displaying a sword with part of its baldric pointing vertically downwards and intruding at its point into the legend, the latter reading: + SECRETVM. WILLELM(I). LV(N) GGESPE. Two nearly complete examples in green wax are in the British Library and in the Berkshire Record Office, and among other survivors a broken specimen in red wax is in The National Archives.²⁶

Stephen Longespée, a younger brother, also had a circular seal of similar dimensions, employing the same arms and symbols, but in a different combination (Fig. 10.6). The obverse has the family's heraldic shield, differenced with



Fig. 10.6. Seal and counterseal of Stephen Longespée, d. 1260 (Magdalen College, Oxford, Archives, Wanborough 34a).

a label of four points for a younger son, flanked by two swords pointing downwards at an angle, with the legend: + SIGILLVM. STEPHA[NI.] [LVNGGES]SPE. The counterseal is Stephen's *secretum*, which is of a totally different design, depicting the heads of five lioncels facing the viewer, like five lioncel masks, in a cross formation, with the legend: + SECRETVM STEPHANI. LVNGESPE. Why he should have chosen five lioncel faces rather than six (to match the family arms) is unclear, but certainly, as we shall see, his widow sported six lioncel faces on her seal.²⁷ The youngest brother, Nicholas, who eventually went into the church and rose to become bishop of Salisbury in 1292, displayed pride in his family on his episcopal seal of dignity, of which a very damaged specimen survives on his will in the Salisbury Cathedral archives (the only example widely known until recently) and, happily, a largely complete one on a notarial instrument in the records of Merton College, Oxford.²⁸ It is a typical, if very fine, episcopal seal of the period, pointed-oval or vesica-shaped, portraying the bishop frontal in full pontificals, his right hand raised in benediction, his left holding a pastoral staff, and standing beneath a trefoiled canopy of Early English design. The canopy apparently rests on side shafts, although on closer inspection these are seen to be in reality two long swords pointing vertically upwards (a nice conceit), and flanking them in the field two shields of the Longespée arms, again differenced with a label of four points to denote a younger son (Fig. 10.7).

It is interesting, incidentally, that Nicholas did not choose to allude to his family in the iconography of the clerical seal he had used earlier, perhaps on becoming a canon of Salisbury Cathedral (by 1262) and still used by



Fig. 10.7. Seal of Nicholas Longespée, bishop of Salisbury, d. 1297 (Merton College, Oxford, Archives, MCR 1303).



Fig. 10.8. Seal of Roger Meuland (Longespée), bishop of Coventry & Lichfield, d. 1295 (TNA, E329/375).

him when he was treasurer of the cathedral (by late 1275), although the legend does not refer to that office.²⁹ Nor, for that matter, did his mother, Ela, as abbess of Lacock.³⁰

Unfortunately, no seal survives of another brother, Richard, who by c. 1250 had become a canon of Salisbury Cathedral; we do not know when he died.³¹ On the other hand, there survive at least six specimens of the episcopal seal of a probable half-brother, Roger, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield (1258–95), usually called 'Meuland', but occasionally, in modern times, Longespée, who was probably an illegitimate son of William the earl.³² The obverse of this seal displays a lion with a long tail supporting the bracket beneath the bishop's standing figure (Fig. 10.8) Though not

Fig. 10.9. Drawing of first seal (obverse & reverse) of Ela Longespée, countess of Warwick, d. 1298 (Bowles & Nichols, pl. iii).



exactly like the typically elongated Longespée lioncels, this animal is probably intended to be reminiscent of them and, if so, alludes to the bishop's paternal arms.³³

Of the four sisters of these brothers, only one achieved real and enduring prominence, Ela, and only she has left seal evidence. That seal evidence is, however, copious and instructive. Ela married twice, first Thomas, earl of Warwick (d. 1242), and secondly Philip Basset, appointed Henry III's justicar in 1261 (d. 1271), after whose death she lived on as a widow until her own death in 1298.³⁴ Since she had no children by either marriage, she was in her later years a wealthy widow and became a generous benefactor to a number of religious and scholarly institutions, including Reading Abbey and Merton College, Oxford.³⁵ She was buried in Osney Abbey, just outside Oxford, from where part of her carved funerary slab was eventually moved to Christ Church cathedral in Oxford, where it still survives.³⁶ We know altogether of three of her seals, as has been elucidated by Adrian Ailes, although it seems probable that only one actually survives today.³⁷ It is striking in each case that the seal is a double-sided seal, with an obverse and reverse of the same shape and dimensions, although the reverse has been described by some commentators as a counterseal, a usage which ought arguably to be eschewed for such situations as this. No original of the first seal survives, and its appearance has come down to us only in the form of two drawings, of the early eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, respectively.³⁸ It has on its obverse a very attractive image of an aristocratic lady slightly turned to the sinister, with a hawk on her left wrist and with her right hand placed

on her breast; she stands between two rather exuberant trails of foliage (echoes of which we shall see in a later seal of another member of the family), the legend reading: + S' ELE. LVNGESPEYE COMITISSE. WARWIC (Fig. 10.9). There is no visual reference otherwise to her Longespée birth; that only becomes apparent on the reverse, which displays in a beautiful design a shield of the Longespée arms within a cusped hexafoil and, above and below, a single lion passant, which is probably a reference to the lions of her grandfather, Henry II, and therefore of the royal family in general; similar individual lions passant occur on some queens' seals.³⁹ The legend of the reverse is a repeat of that on the obverse. The only reference to her husband, the earl of Warwick, on either side of the seal is, indirectly, in the legend. In her second seal, however, produced after her marriage to Philip Basset in c. 1255, the images become more complex. The obverse is replaced by a new frontally standing figure of the countess holding out with her left hand a Longespée shield of arms, while to her right is set a shield of the arms of her late husband (chequey, a chevron ermine), the legend reading: + S' ELE. BASSET. COMITISSE. WAREWYKIE. The reverse is very similar to that of the countess' first seal, except that now it is the Basset arms that appear on the shield in the centre, within a quatrefoil (not a hexafoil), and the single lions above and below are rampant, the legend being the same as on the obverse (Fig. 10.10). A very fine specimen of this seal is appended to a deed to Merton College, dated 2 November 1266, which is also sealed by her then husband, Philip Basset.⁴⁰ For Ela's third seal, used in her widowhood after her second husband's death in 1271, we are largely dependent on another drawing in *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals* (Fig. 10.11). This shows what looks like a simplified version of the first seal, with a very similar female figure on the obverse (but without the trails of foliage), and a reverse apparently identical to that on the first seal, showing the Longespée arms within a hexafoil and lions passant above and below (although only the lower survives).⁴¹

If we turn to the known seals of the wives/widows of two of these brothers, we find a picture of increasing diversity. William II's wife was Idonea de Camville, daughter and heiress of Richard de Camville. She evidently had two seals, neither of which has been widely known



Fig. 10.10. Second seal (obverse & reverse) of Ela Longespée, countess of Warwick (Merton College, Oxford, Archives, MCR 646).

until relatively recently. Both are found in a small group of deeds in the Berkshire Record Office concerning property which, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, became part of the endowment of the Eastbury, or Isbury, chantry and charity in the church and parish of Lambourn (Berkshire).⁴² The intriguing aspect of the matter is that the two seals are used on very similar deeds concerning the same land with the same witnesses (one minor change of name), although one has a few extra details. The first seal makes no allusion to Idonea's Longespée marriage, but the second does so spectacularly, both on the obverse and (probably) on the counterseal (which the first seal lacks). The first seal simply depicts a noble lady, with the legend: SIGILLV(M). YD[.....]..[...].NVILE.⁴³ The second seal, however, to judge from the style of the lady's elegant dress and headdress, is later than the first and depicts, moreover, her husband's six lioncels, in two groups of three, one on either side of her figure (Fig. 10.12). This looks like an attempt to incorporate the lady's married arms in a form which predates the widespread introduction of shields of arms, of the type we have already seen. The legend



is: SIGILLVM YDONIE: D'. KAVNVILE. The counterseal is the lady's *secretum* and depicts, in my view, a very free interpretation of one of the Longespée lioncels, although the possibility cannot be entirely excluded that it represents a Camville lion (for her father); the legend reads + SECRETVM: YDONIE:

Fig. 10.11. Drawing of third seal (obverse & reverse) of Ela Longespée, countess of Warwick (Northants. Rec. Off., ms F. H. 170, fo. 76r).



Fig. 10.12. Second seal and counterseal of Idonea de Camville, d. 1251 x 52 (*Berkshire Rec. Off., D/QI T13/6*).

Fig. 10.13. Seal and counterseal of Emeline de Lacy, countess of Ulster, d. 1276 (*Magdalen College, Oxford, Archives, Wanborough 31a*).

D'. KAMPVILE.⁴⁴ This little group of deeds includes three examples of the second seal with counterseal, in various states of completeness, one of which is attached to a deed in which the lady describes herself as the widow of William Longespée, but the other two deeds do not state this.⁴⁵ She died in 1251/2, within two years of her late husband.⁴⁶ The widow of Stephen Longespée, the seneschal of Gascony in 1254 and justiciar of Ireland from 1258, was Emeline de Lacy, widow earlier of Hugh de Lacy, earl of Ulster.⁴⁷ After Stephen's death in 1260, and in anticipation of her own death, which was to take place in 1276, Emeline founded a chantry

in the parish of Wanborough (Wiltshire) for the souls of themselves, their ancestors and successors, the possessions and copious deeds of which in the later fifteenth century came fortunately into the possession of Magdalen College, Oxford, by gift of the founder, William Waynflete, bishop of Winchester, and there they remain. The collection contains several seals of Emeline and her relatives, including a magnificent specimen of her own seal with counterseal, appended by cords to one of the deeds establishing the chantry (Fig. 10.13).⁴⁸ On the obverse we see the countess's elegant figure, in a dress and headdress very reminiscent of Idonea de Camville's, a hawk on her left wrist, flanked by two sets of three lioncel faces (as we saw earlier, her husband, Stephen, had sported five such faces on his counterseal); the legend is: + SIGILL[VM] [EM]ELINE [CO]MITISSE: VLTONIE. The smaller counterseal, her *secretum*, depicts a shield bearing a single lion rampant, evidently a Longespée lioncel derived from her second husband, suspended from a branch or clump of foliage, the legend being: + SECRETVM EMELINE. COMITISSE: VLTONIE. The Wanborough archive at Magdalen College contains eight other deeds in Emeline's name, dealing with antecedent or supplementary transactions relating to the formal foundation of the chantry; with one possible exception, these are all sealed on parchment tags with the countess's *secretum* alone.⁴⁹

Coming to the next generation, the grandchildren of William and Ela Longespée, earl and countess of Salisbury, we have first the surviving *secretum* of William Longespée III, the eldest son of the Crusader and who died early in 1257, showing another, unique, modification of the Longespée repertoire, this time displaying an unsheathed sword pointing downwards with a single lioncel face on each side; the legend is: + SECRETVM. WILLELMI NGESPEIE (Fig. 10.14).⁵⁰ I have not been able to identify this William's main seal with certainty, although Kennett's *Parochial Antiquities* purports to describe a seal on an original deed that was undoubtedly issued by him, with the impression of a gauntlet and the inscription: + SIGILLVM WILL'I LUNGESPIE.⁵¹ The seal of William III's wife is known from two drawings, of 1649 and the early nineteenth century, but no original appears to survive (Fig. 10.15). She was Matilda Clifford, daughter and





Fig. 10.14. Counterseal (*secretum*) of William Longespée III, d. 1257 (TNA, C148/109).

heir of Walter Lord Clifford, and some years after her husband's death in 1257 she married in 1271 (in somewhat unclear circumstances) Sir John Giffard, who was alleged initially to have abducted her from one of her manors.⁵² Her seal, used in her widowhood (1257–71), is an attractive piece, which celebrates heraldically her birth and first marriage. The obverse depicts her standing frontally under a trefoil canopy between two small trees on which hang shields of arms; that to her left, whose trunk she grasps, bears the arms of her Longespée marriage, undifferenced, while the other tree has a chequy shield, with a band, for her Clifford birth; the legend is: S. MATILDIS :: LVNGESPEE; the counterseal is her *secretum* with a triple-branching tree or bush, upon which is displayed a shield of the Longespée arms, undifferenced, the legend reading: * SECRETVM MATILDIS :: LVNGESPEIE. In other words, she has adopted the Longespée family name and given considerable prominence to its arms. William III's sister (and this Matilda's sister-in-law), Ela, married Sir James de Audley of Audley (Staffs), a prominent baron who played a major role in the baronial troubles of Henry



Fig. 10.15. Drawing of seal and counterseal of Matilda Clifford, d. 1282 × 85 (Bowles and Nichols, pl. ii).

III's middle years and was elected as one of the pro-royal members of the council of 15 under the Provisions of Oxford in 1258. Like Stephen Longespée before him, he eventually became justiciar of Ireland, and he died in 1272.⁵³ His widow, who used the name Ela de Audley, lived on until 1299. A single impression of her seal survives in the British Library, appended to a deed of 1274, but it is very worn and its details are better observed in the nineteenth-century drawing in Bowles and Nichols (Fig. 10.16). In design it is rather similar to the second seal of her aunt, Ela, countess of Warwick, discussed earlier; it shows Ela holding out an undifferenced shield of the Longespée arms in her right hand and, in her left, the fretty shield of Audley, with the legend: * SIGILLVM. ELE DE AUDELEG; sadly no counterseal is recorded in this case.⁵⁴



Fig. 10.16. Drawing of seal of Ela de Audley, d. 1299 (Bowles and Nichols, pl. ii).



Fig. 10.17. Seal and counterseal of Emeline Longespée, d. 1331 (Magdalen College, Oxford, Archives, Wanborough 30a).

The splendid seal of Emeline Longespée, one of the daughters of Stephen Longespée and Emeline de Lacy, continues the practice of incorporating heraldic shields into the design (Fig. 10.17). Standing under an elaborate trefoiled canopy, the richly attired lady holds out with her left hand a shield of the Longespée arms with a label of four points, from her father, and with her right hand the shield of her husband, Maurice FitzMaurice (a saltire with a label of five points); below her arms on either side are an unsheathed sword pointing upwards and a lioncel passant, each lioncel facing inwards; the legend reads: S' EMELINE LVNGESPEIE. More symbolism occurs in the *secretum* on the counterseal, which resembles with subtle differences the obverse of the seal of her father, Stephen Longespée. The shield of Longespée arms with a label of four points is the same, but the two flanking unsheathed swords point upward (instead of downwards as on the father's seal) and a single lioncel walks across the top of the shield; the legend, in French, is very singular: + FOL. EST. KI. ME. BRISERA. FORCE. LI. A. KI. LA. LETTRE. VA., which has been aptly rendered by Adrian Ailes as: 'Foolhardy is he who breaks me except him to whom this letter is sent'.⁵⁵ No fewer than five examples of this excellent seal survive among the Wanborough deeds in Magdalen College, Oxford. Emeline's husband died in 1286, but she lived on until 1331, another case of a long-lived Longespée lady.⁵⁶

As regards the disposition of heraldic arms on the seals of Longespée ladies, whether they

were so by birth or by marriage, no consistent pattern can be discerned. In the four cases where two shields are displayed, two show the lady holding her arms by birth in her right hand or set to her right, with her arms by marriage held in her left hand or set to her left – these are the seals of Matilda Clifford, wife of William Longespée III, and Ela Longespée, wife of James de Audley; the other two cases show the exact opposite – namely, the second seal of Ela Longespée, countess of Warwick, and the seal of Emeline Longespée, wife of Maurice FitzMaurice.⁵⁷ The heraldic devices on the other female seals in our group are not deployed in a similar way and are, therefore, not susceptible to this kind of analysis.

The seals of the first two generations of the family, after the earl and countess of Salisbury, have produced ample evidence of the vigour and adaptability of the family's heraldic arms and symbols. The habit continued into later generations, although the age of the large pointed oval seal, with a depiction of the seal's owner, was coming to an end in favour of a generally smaller circular seal on which the iconography was overwhelmingly heraldic, particularly for women, so that, while images of Longespée ladies and their female relatives by marriage had been very prominent hitherto, the fashion seems to have been abandoned after the early fourteenth century. I do not propose to take my detailed examination of the Longespée seals much further into the fourteenth century, but I should like to conclude with three examples, two male, one female, which show the same principles at work in a later period. The first is the seal of Alan la Zouche (d. 1314), the grandson of Stephen Longespée, through his mother Ela. She was the sister of the Emeline whose seals we have discussed and she married Roger la Zouche (d. 1285). The only known impression of Alan's seal was attached, with many others, to the so-called Barons' Letter to Pope Boniface VIII in 1301; it now survives, along with its fellows, as a detached seal (Fig. 10.18). It is circular and shows on the obverse a shield hanging from the neck of a lion and bearing the ten bezants of the arms of Zouche, surrounded by six lioncels passant in allusion to his maternal arms, three lioncels climbing up the dexter side, as it were, and three up the other; the legend reads: SIGILLVM: ALANI: LA SOVCHE.⁵⁸ The other male seal is that of Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln and constable

of Chester, who in 1256 married Margaret, daughter and heir of William Longespée III (who himself died the following year), and thus acquired through her the bulk of the Longespée inheritance. His seal is a splendid example of the great circular equestrian type, with the earl galloping to the sinister, his shield displaying a single lion rampant, most probably an adaptation of the Longespée lioncel in recognition of his marriage, which he appears to have adopted as his arms in place of his own inherited arms; the legend reads: S' HENRICI DE LACI COMITIS LINCOLNIE ET CONSTABVLAR' CESTR' (Fig. 10.19).⁵⁹ The counterseal, which the earl also used frequently on its own, is a smaller circular seal showing the same shield with lion rampant and flanked by a single lioncel on each side, of unmistakable Longespée type (with their sleek, lean bodies and excessively long tails), facing outward and each with its head turned inward toward the shield, the legend reading: SIGILLVM SECRETI.⁶⁰ I have found no evidence for other husbands of Longespée ladies adopting Longespée devices in this way; it is no doubt the case here because the husband in question has married a Longespée heiress. The final seal to be discussed here is that of Henry de Lacy's daughter, Alice de Lacy, great-great-granddaughter of the earl and countess of Salisbury in the senior line, and hereditary countess of Lincoln and holder of the lands of the earldom of Salisbury, the former title inherited from her father (d. 1311), the latter position from her mother, Margaret Longespée (d. 1306/1310). The surviving impression of her seal was appended to a deed made after the death of her husband, Thomas, earl of Lancaster, cousin and principal opponent of King Edward II, executed at Pontefract after the Battle of Boroughbridge in 1322.⁶¹ The seal makes no reference to this marriage, but celebrates her parents' marriage (Fig. 10.20). Moreover, it exemplifies the more fashionable type of seal for a lady of her rank, being circular and displaying an heraldic shield, in this case with the impaled arms of Lacy (dexter), a lion rampant, for her father, and of Longespée (sinister), for her mother, and surrounded by three wyverns; the legend is barely legible on the very damaged original in The National Archives, dating from 1322, but the drawing in Bowles and Nichols shows it clearly as: * SIGILLVM ALAYS DE LACY.⁶²



Fig. 10.18. Seal of Alan la Zouche, d. 1331 (TNA, E26/2/31A).

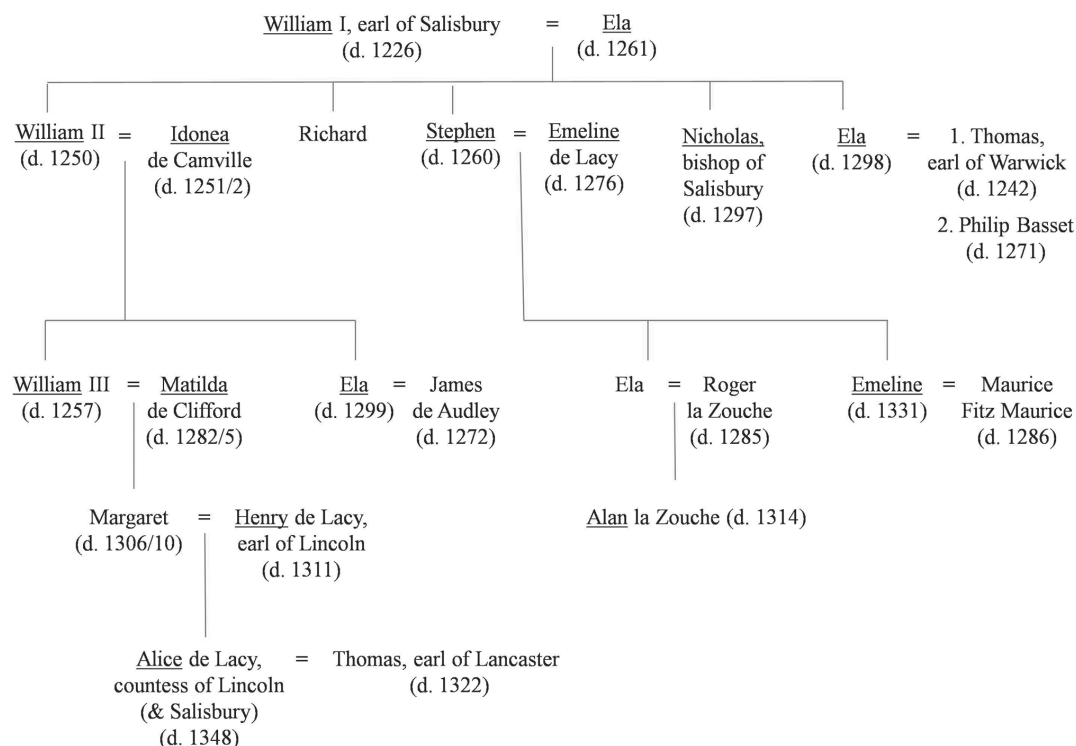


Fig. 10.19. Seal and counterseal of Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln, d. 1311 (TNA, C 13/G 17).



Fig. 10.20. Seal of Alice de Lacy, countess of Lincoln, d. 1348), and drawing (TNA, E40/198; Bowles and Nichols, pl. ii).

Fig. 10.21. Select family tree of the Longespées. Names underlined indicate those whose seals are discussed in this paper.



This is a fitting point at which to stop, since, with the death without direct heirs of this Alice de Lacy in 1348,⁶³ the senior line of descent from the first Longespée couple came to an end (Fig. 10.21). Alice was the last representative of that line and its claim to the Salisbury title. In fact, of course, neither Alice nor her forbears back to the eldest son of Earl William and Countess Ela had used the comital title (although its association with Alice was strong enough for her to be given the title, ‘countess of Lincoln and of Salisbury’, in the endorsement of the deed of 1322 cited above); and Edward III had, in 1337 before Alice’s death, assumed the extinction of the title in the old line by conferring it upon William de Montagu, a member of an entirely different family.⁶⁴ I have not traced the later history of the Longespée arms and devices, but of their vibrancy in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries there can surely be no doubt.

Notes

- 1 I am very grateful to Dr Adrian Ailes and Professor Nicholas Vincent for advice at certain points in the preparation of this paper, and to Dr Ailes for reading and commenting so helpfully on the draft text. I remain solely responsible for any remaining errors and

infelicities. I am also very grateful to Mr Simon Eager for his invaluable photographic assistance. Photographs are reproduced by kind permission of the owners of seals, as follows: The British Library Board, Figs 10.3 and 10.4 (left); The National Archives, Kew, Figs 10.8, 10.14, 10.18 (left), 10.19, 10.20 (left); the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, Figs 10.6, 10.13, 10.17; the Warden and Fellows of Merton College, Oxford, Figs 10.7, 10.10; the Berkshire County Archivist, Reading, Figs 10.5 and 10.12; the Northamptonshire County Archivist, Northampton, Fig. 10.11. Photographs in 10.5–8, 10.10–14, 10.17–19, 10.20 (left) are by Simon Eager.

- 2 S. Lloyd, ‘William II: the Making of an English Crusading Hero’, parts I and II, *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, xxxv–xxxvi (1991–2), part II, 90.
- 3 For the earl and his countess, see *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter *ODNB*], *sub nominibus*; G. E. C(ockayne), *The Complete Peerage*, rev. edn, 14 vols in 15 (London, 1910–98) [hereafter *Complete Peerage*], xi, pp. 379–82.
- 4 Canterbury, Dean and Chapter Archives, Register A, fos. 66v–67r.
- 5 Lloyd, ‘William II’, esp. 42–4.
- 6 See *A New History of Ireland*, ed. T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin and F. J. Byrne, vol. IX (Oxford, 1984), p. 471; *Handbook of British Chronology*, 3rd edn., ed. E. B. Fryde, D. E. Greenway, S. Porter and I. Roy (London, 1986), p. 161.

- 7 On Nicholas Longespée, see *English Episcopal Acta*, 36, *Salisbury 1229–1262*, ed. B. R. Kemp (British Academy, 2010), pp. lx–lxii.
- 8 *Complete Peerage*, xii (2), p. 365; on Philip Basset, a supporter of Henry III during the baronial troubles, see also *ODNB*, *sub nomine*.
- 9 *Annales Monastici*, ed. H. R. Luard, 5 vols (London, Rolls Series, 1864–9), ii, pp. 164–5 (Waverley); iii, p. 10 (Dunstable); iv, p. 369 (Worcester).
- 10 For Matilda's marriage to Geoffrey, count of Anjou, see M. Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1991), pp. 54–6.
- 11 See *Facsimiles of Early Charters from Northamptonshire Collections*, ed. F. M. Stenton, Northamptonshire Record Society, iv (1930), pp. 24–5, no. vi; *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals*, ed. L. C. Lloyd and D. M. Stenton (Oxford, 1950), no. 429. The Young King's charter, which confirms his uncle William's gift, is *Facsimiles...*, no. vii, in which William is called *patruus meus Willelmus longespee*.
- 12 *Annales Monastici* iv, p. 33.
- 13 See above, n. 10.
- 14 *Chroniques des Comtes d'Anjou et des Seigneurs d'Amboise*, ed. L. Halphen and R. Poupardin (Paris, 1913), p. 179.
- 15 A. Ailes, *The Origins of the Royal Arms of England, their development to 1199*, Reading Medieval Studies, Monographs 2 (Reading, 1982), pp. 47, 99 n. 25.
- 16 For an account of the plaque and its probable date, see the pamphlet by S. and M. Nikitine, *L'Émail Plantagenêt* (Nancy 1981). See also *Complete Peerage*, xi, appendix G, pp. 133–42.
- 17 For Earl William's monument and effigy in Salisbury Cathedral, see S. Brown, *Sumptuous and Richly Adorn'd: the Decoration of Salisbury Cathedral*, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, 1999, pp. 9–10, 116, 151, and figures 6 and 91. Note, however, that the earl's mother was almost certainly not Rosamund Clifford, and that his effigy is of stone, not Tournai marble.
- 18 See n. 11.
- 19 In this paper I propose to retain the term 'lioncels' for the Longespée beasts, as a translation of John of Marmoutier's Latin (*jeunculi*), but many heralds, historians and commentators render them as 'lions', and certainly on some later versions of the same arms borne by other people the animals depicted may not look very different from lions. On some Longespée seals, however, there may also be depictions of lions which are apparently distinct from the Longespée animals and most probably represent the lions of the royal arms of England.
- 20 W. L. Bowles and J. G. Nichols, *Annals and Antiquities of Lacock Abbey in the County of Wilts* (London, 1835) [hereafter Bowles and Nichols], pls 1–4. I have failed to locate originals for at least some of these.
- 21 Northamptonshire Record Office [hereafter NRO], ms F. H. 170; for an edition, omitting most of the drawings, see n. 11. For Ela's seal, see below.
- 22 Winchester College Archives, no. 9022; calendared, *Winchester College Muniments: A Descriptive List*, compiled by S. Himsforth with P. Gwyn, W. Graham and J. Harvey, 3 vols (Chichester, 1976–84), ii, p. 338, no. 9022.
- 23 Bowles and Nichols, pl. 1, no. 1 (obverse); no. 4 (reverse), the latter incorrectly captioned; W. de G. Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 6 vols (London 1887–1900) [hereafter Birch], no. 6191. The seal cast, British library, lxxx. 92, which is assigned to the earl in Birch, no. 11375, is in fact of his son, William Longespée II, and is evidently taken from the original seal on The National Archives [hereafter TNA], DL 25/114 (see below).
- 24 Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms Latin 5425, p. 78. I am indebted to Professor Nicholas Vincent for sending me a photograph of this drawing. The deed in question is a gift to Bradenstoke priory in Wiltshire: *Calendar of Documents preserved in France, illustrative of the History of Great Britain and Ireland, I, A.D. 918–1206*, ed. J. H. Round, HMSO (1899), no. 179; *The Cartulary of Bradenstoke Priory*, ed. V. C. M. London, Wiltshire Record Society 35 (1979), no. 643.
- 25 BL, Harley Charter 53 B. 12; Northamptonshire Record Office, ms. F. H. 170, fo. 18r; Bowles and Nichols, pl. 4.
- 26 BL, Additional Charter 19622; Reading, Berkshire Record Office, D/Q1 T13/11; TNA, DL 25/114. The first of these is calendared in *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, ed. B. R. Kemp, 2 vols, Camden 4th Series, 31, 33 (London 1986–7), ii, no. 810.
- 27 For a very good example of Stephen's seal, see Oxford, Magdalen College, Archives, Wanborough 34a; note also *ibid.*, Wanborough 19a and 42a, both with much damaged seals. Other examples (obverse only) include BL, Harley Charters 53 B. 14 and 15. For his widow's seal, see below. Regarding the number of lioncel masks on Stephen's counterseal – five arranged cross-wise – it was suggested to me in private discussion after my paper that the five could be read as two rows of three, one vertical, the other horizontal, to give a total of six masks.
- 28 Salisbury, Dean and Chapter Muniments, Press IV, Box 'W': 1297; Oxford, Merton College, MCR 1303.
- 29 TNA, E42/241; E42/267; E42/376 (the last as treasurer of Salisbury).

- 30 TNA, E42/345; E42/346.
- 31 John le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066–1300*: IV, *Salisbury*, compiled by D. E. Greenway (British Academy, 1991), p. 130.
- 32 *Idem*, XI, *Coventry and Lichfield*, compiled by C. Brooke, J. Denton and D. E. Greenway (British Academy, 2011), p. 8. King Henry III called him his nephew in 1257 (*Calendar of Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office, 1247–58*, pp. 540, 542).
- 33 The finest surviving examples of his seal are TNA, E329/375, on a deed of 1259, and E329/394, on a deed of 1285.
- 34 *Complete Peerage*, xii (2), p. 365. For Philip Basset, see above, n. 8.
- 35 See Bowles and Nichols, pp. 160–2; BL, Harley Charter 54 D. 15; BL, Additional Charter 19633; Oxford, Merton College, MCR 641–642.
- 36 *Complete Peerage*, xii (2), p. 365; Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, *City of Oxford* (1939), p. 42a.
- 37 A. Ailes, 'Armorial Portrait Seals of Medieval Women in the PRO', in *Tribute to an Armorialist*, ed. J. Campbell-Kease (London, 2000), pp. 225–6.
- 38 F. Sandford, *A Genealogical History of the Kings and Queens of England and Monarchs of Great Britain, &c.*, 1066–1707, revised S. Stebbing (London, 1707), p. 57; Bowles and Nichols, pl. III.
- 39 Sandford, *Genealogical History*, p. 57, showing the two-sided seals of Eleanor of Provence and Eleanor of Castile, each of which has on its obverse a single lion beneath the queen's standing figure.
- 40 Oxford, Merton College, MCR 646.
- 41 NRO, ms F. H. 70, fo. 76r.
- 42 Berkshire Record Office [hereafter BRO], D/Q1 T13; *Victoria History of the County of Berkshire [VCH]* iv, pp. 252, 265.
- 43 BRO, D/Q1 T13/4.
- 44 BRO, D/Q1 T13/6.
- 45 BRO, D/Q1 T13/5 (widow); T13/6; T13/24.
- 46 *Complete Peerage*, xi, p. 383.
- 47 *Complete Peerage*, xii (2), p. 171.
- 48 Oxford, Magdalen College Archives [hereafter MCA], Wanborough 31a. The same seal was presumably affixed to the formal foundation deed of the chantry, but unfortunately this survives only as a fourteenth-century copy (*ibid.*, Wanborough 66a).
- 49 MCA, Wanborough 20a; 22; 23; 24; 33; 36a; 48a; 59a, the probable exception being 33.
- 50 TNA, C148/109, William's seal being affixed to one part of a chirograph agreement, dated December 1256, between William and Edmund de Lacy, earl of Lincoln, by which William's only daughter and heir, Margaret, married the earl's son and heir, Henry de Lacy, later earl of Lincoln.
- 51 W. Kennett, *Parochial Antiquities attempted in the history of Ambrosden, Burcester, and other adjacent parts in the counties of Oxford and Bucks.*, new edition, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1818), i, p. 351.
- 52 The two drawings are: Cumbria (formerly Westmorland) Record Office, ms WD/Hoth Ace 988 no. 10, vol. 1, p. 169; Bowles and Nichols, pl. II, nos 3–4. (I owe the former reference to the kindness of Professor Nicholas Vincent). For the circumstances of Matilda's marriage to Sir John Giffard, see *Complete Peerage*, v, p. 642 and note (c); xi, p. 384; *English Episcopal Acta*, 37, *Salisbury 1263–97*, ed. B. R. Kemp (British Academy, 2010), no. 403.
- 53 *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion 1258–67*, selected by R. F. Treharne, edited by I. J. Sanders (Oxford, 1973), p. 104, clause 9; *A New History of Ireland* (see n. 6), p. 471; *Handbook of British Chronology* (see note 6), p. 161.
- 54 BL, Additional Charter 10,619; Bowles and Nichols, pl. II, no. 5.
- 55 Ailes, 'Armorial Portrait Seals', p. 229.
- 56 MCA, Wanborough 22a, 30, 30a, 34, 46a, For Emeline's death, see *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem in the Public Record Office*, vii, p. 312.
- 57 See, respectively, figs. 15, 16, 10, 17.
- 58 TNA, E26/2/31A.
- 59 A very fine example, in green wax, is TNA, C13/G 17. For the earl's changing of his arms, see *Rolls of Arms, Edward I (1272–1307)*, ed. G. J. Brault, 2 vols (Woodbridge, 1997), ii, p. 247. I owe the latter reference to the kindness of Adrian Ailes.
- 60 For three examples, in different coloured wax, see TNA, DL 25/2133; DL 25/2337; E326/10862.
- 61 *Complete Peerage*, vii, pp. 387–96; J. R. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster 1307–1322* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 9, 311–12.
- 62 TNA, E40/198; Bowles and Nichols, pl. II, no. 6.
- 63 *Complete Peerage*, xi, p. 385.
- 64 *Complete Peerage*, xi, p. 385.

(Un)conventional images. A case-study of radial motifs on personal seals

Elizabeth A. New

This paper will examine a number of seals with a radial motif and set this examination alongside an investigation of the seal-owners. In so doing, we will pursue two related lines of enquiry. The first will address the extent to which ‘conventional’ designs can in fact be encoded with cultural meaning. The second strand will consider the need for caution in, as has typically been the case, identifying radial motifs as indicators of the middling or lower social status of the seal-owner.

Personal seals, usually defined as those used by an individual in a private capacity, constitute the largest group of extant matrices and seal-impressions from medieval England and Wales.¹ Despite an awareness of this corpus of material, scholars instead have traditionally focussed their attention on the numerically smaller groups of seals issuing from government (royal, national and local), the church and the ecclesiastical and secular elites,² while only a handful of investigations have been directed at the seals of individuals from below the very highest levels of society.³ Some efforts have been made to redress this balance, assisted in recent years by access to large data-sets that do not discriminate by motif, owner or user.⁴ Furthermore, the integration of sigillographic material into social, economic, prosopographical, cultural and legal studies is leading to a growing awareness of

the importance of seals as evidence for a wide range of questions relating to medieval societies.⁵ A ‘holistic’ approach to personal seals – combining attention to the graphic elements of motif and wording as well as a study of sealing practices and the seal-owners – has already proved fruitful for studies of the highest levels of society.⁶ While such an approach becomes more difficult as one investigates those lower down the social scale, it is if anything even more important, for here seals represent a greater proportion of the evidence available for such men and women.

Personal seals have tended to be sub-categorised by their principal motif, with those that display heraldic and equestrian imagery dominating studies of the material.⁷ Seal imagery that is familiar to scholars through other media or that can easily be associated with particular types of people or cultural trends have also elicited some interest. Thus seals with ‘merchant marks’ have been explored in the context of urban society and the mercantile economy, while those with hybrid grotesques or hares riding hounds have been studied in the context of the subversive visual culture of the fourteenth century.⁸ In contrast, while birds and animals are frequently identified as a significant sub-category of motif found on personal seals, little attempt has been made to establish whether, for example, certain types

of fauna were employed by particular groups or social ‘types’ of seal-owners.⁹ The stylised lily and radial motifs that so frequently appear on seals of the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries are almost always described simply as ‘conventional’ or ‘miscellaneous’ designs, and identified as sigillographic motifs used by men and women of relatively modest social status.¹⁰

The seal impressions featured in this essay all have a radial motif. The images are in fact quite distinctive, but raise two significant problems often faced when investigating ‘conventional’ designs: firstly, issues regarding the standardisation of terminology and, secondly, the difficulty of interpretation. The descriptor ‘radial’¹¹ can, for example, include motifs variously described as ‘stylised flowers’, ‘leaves’, ‘stars’, or ‘elaborate crosses’. Most certainly, there are differences in the form the radial pattern takes, and sometimes it is clear that the image was intended to represent a flower in bloom or conifer branches laid out as spokes from a central hub. Confronted with the same motif, the archivist or historian may however choose to record this in a number of different ways, and the same individual may even not always be consistent or confident in their own recording or description. When discussing the types of motif commonly found on personal seals of the thirteenth century, Paul Harvey and Andrew McGuinness described one variant of the radial image as ‘an arrangement of ears of corn (or perhaps conifer branches)’.¹² Furthermore, while scholars have noted considerable variation within the broad categories of ‘conventional’ motif, the question of whether this has

significance beyond the artistic prowess of the seal-maker or whim of the purchaser has rarely been asked and never fully investigated.¹³

Based upon an analysis of two large data-sets of seal impressions from medieval England and Wales, it is apparent that, confirming previous assumptions, radial motifs are found across the whole country on seals used by both men and women.¹⁴ The generic motif appears in the twelfth century and was still employed in the sixteenth century, but the greatest number of seal impressions with this image is found in the thirteenth century.¹⁵ One immediate question is why the radial motif was used as a sigillographic image at all. The motif is not based upon the representation of the human form and therefore does not classify by social type in the same manner as, for example, the image of an equestrian warrior on the seal of a nobleman.¹⁶ Instead it has far closer affinities with heraldic devices, and it is no coincidence that motifs later categorised as genuinely armorial bearings were being employed as sigillographic designs at exactly the same time as the radial pattern emerges as a common motif on seals.¹⁷ It may therefore be proposed that these motifs operate within the same semiotic framework as devices which retrospectively are frequently termed ‘armorial’ or ‘proto-armorial’ and should be read in this manner, that is as signs encoded with culture-specific meaning. This in turn may start to challenge some existing preconceptions about the development of heraldry and what contemporaries considered a ‘true’ heraldic device.¹⁸

Furthermore, Andrew McGuinness warned that ‘there are dangers in employing terms such as ‘conventional’ to describe seal designs because even within the broad term there are often subtle differences’. In making this point, he observes the ‘enormous’ variety in stylised flower motif.¹⁹ The variety within the category of radial device is indeed considerable; on closer inspection however some notable subsets and apparently unique instances emerge. We can explore these points further through a survey of seal impressions attached to documents relating to Margam Abbey, in south Wales (Glamorgan).

At first glance the impression of the seal of John Mygnoth, validating a grant to Margam Abbey in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, fits comfortably within the radial category (Fig. 11.1). The image is of a stylised

Fig. 11.1. Seal of John Mygnoth. Actual size 20 mm. National Library of Wales, Penrice & Margam Ch. 75, undated, early thirteenth century. Photograph: author. By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales.



flower with broad petals and long stamens, the matrix clearly having been carefully engraved even though it is quite small for the period.²⁰ On a closer inspection of the image, however, something quite remarkable is revealed. There are chalices on each of the petals, the stamens are nails, and the centre of the flower appears to be a lion's head full face. It is in fact a 'passion flower', the chalices being the 'cup of suffering' as well as receptacles for Christ's blood and the Eucharistic wine, with the number of petals and nails alluding to the Five Wounds of Christ.²¹ The lion's head at the centre has been interpreted as the lion of Judah, but since leonine imagery permeates the Bible this part of the design is open to multiple interpretations.²² It is a powerful, theologically mutable and yet devotionally specific and highly sophisticated image.²³ What is perhaps most striking about this seal is that it displays what superficially appears to be a 'conventional' motif, but whoever designed the seal deliberately encoded within the imagery layers of meaning.

Another example of a small seal with a stylised flower motif makes it absolutely clear that not only could seals with such images be highly sophisticated, but that they were used by people of the highest levels in society and therefore cannot automatically be considered as an indicator of an owner of humble social status. Impressions of a seal only 23 mm across, attached to two documents dated 1265, has what at first glance once again appears to be a standard stylised flower (Fig. 11.2).²⁴



Fig. 11.3. Communal seal of the town of Kenfig. Actual size 34 mm. National Library of Wales, Penrice & Margam Ch.198, 1320. Photograph: author. By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales.



However, each of the six petals clearly bears a shield with the three chevrons of the de Clare family. Given the small size of the original matrix and the overall design of the seal, an assumption might be that the matrix was made for the younger brother or a female relative of one of the senior Clare lords. In fact, as the legend makes quite clear, it was one of the seals of Gilbert de Clare, 'Gilbert the Red', (d. 1295) seventh earl of Gloucester and sixth earl of Hertford, a leading ally of Simon de Montfort who later became the son-in-law of Edward I, and one of the most powerful men in later thirteenth century England and Wales.²⁵

This last point leads to the consideration of a sub-group of seals from the vicinity of Kenfig in south Wales a number of which use a particular variant of radial motif. While one-off examples such as the seals of John Mygnoth and Gilbert de Clare are of interest, they may just be aberrations; individuals experimenting with established types, perhaps in a deliberately subversive or provocative manner and possibly because they had other seals that represented them in more conventional ways.²⁶ Instead, perhaps even more remarkable than the use of an apparently standard image subtly adapted for a particular individual is a communal seal that employs such a motif. The common seal of Kenfig dates from the mid-thirteenth century, the earliest impression validating a document of c. 1250 × 1299 (Fig. 11.3).²⁷ What makes this seal stand out is, paradoxically, its very 'ordinary' design, for without the legend the image of four conifer branches or ears of

Fig. 11.2. Seal of Gilbert de Clare, (d. 1295) seventh earl of Gloucester and sixth earl of Hertford. Actual size 23 mm. National Library of Wales, Penrice & Margam Ch. 177, 1265. Photograph: author. By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales.

Table 11.1.

<i>Seal owner</i>	<i>Reference and date</i>	<i>Additional information</i>
Alaithur ab Idnerth	PM Ch. 1954 (1200×1208 ⁱ); PM Ch. 1959 (c. 1208 ⁱⁱ)	PM Ch. 1954 witnessed by Rhys Goch; PM Ch. 1959 witnessed by Rhys Goch and David Scurlage. Brother of Iorwerth ab Idnerth. Witnessed documents with Rhys Goch (Pryce, <i>Acts</i> , nos 142, 143, 157, 158, 183, 186). Used a second seal (two stylised lilies head-to-head) to validate PM 1958 (c. 1208 ⁱⁱⁱ).
David Scurlage	PM Ch. 61 (1202 ^{iv}); PM Ch. 2016 (1200×1220 ^v)	Witnessed document issued by Alaithur ab Idnerth (PM Ch. 1959) along with Rhys Goch. Acknowledged Morgan ap Caradog as overlord. ^{vi}
Gryffydd ap Cadrawd Gillemicel	PM Ch. 1965 (early thirteenth century ^{vii})	Kinsman Walaveth ap William Gillemicel's seal depicts bow and arrow with teasel heads. ^{viii}
Gruffudd brother of Rhys Goch Fychan	BL Harley Ch 75 B 39 s. 1 (1225×1250 ^{ix})	Son of Rhys Goch(?) Document witnessed by Rhys Goch. Gruffudd's brother Meurig's seal has a many-petalled flower as a device; his brother Rhys's seal displays a stylised lily.
Iorwerth ab Idnerth	PM Ch. 1960 (1200 ^x)	Brother of Alaithur ab Idnerth.
Kedic ap Meiler	PM Ch. 2028s.1 (1200×1225 ^{xi})	
Rhys Goch	PM Ch. 1997 (1200×1208 ^{xii}); PM Ch. 1998 (1207 ^{xiii})	Witnessed documents with Alaithur ab Idnerth (Pryce, <i>Acts</i> , nos 142, 143, 157, 158, 183, 186). Father of Gruffudd brother of Rhys Goch Fychan(?) Acknowledged Morgan ap Caradog as overlord. ^{xiv} Forester for lord of Ogmore. ^{xv}
Rhirid ap Kenaf	BL Harley Ch 75 C 24 (c. 1196×1199 ^{xvi})	Had another charter to Margam witnessed by Morgan ap Caradog, overlord of David Scurlage and Rhys Goch. ^{xvii}
Robert Penarth	PM Ch. 1949 (c. 1230 ^{xviii})	
Tudur ap Robert ap Einion	BL Harley Ch 75 C 47 s. 1 (late twelfth, early thirteenth century ^{xix})	Brother's seals have image of hand with lance and pennon (s.2), stylised flower within frame (s.3).

ⁱ Patterson, *Scriptorium*, Appx. 1 no. 164ⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, no. 169ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, no. 168^{iv} *Ibid.*, no. 59^v *Ibid.*, no. 216^{vi} RCAHMW *Inventory of the Ancient Monuments of Glamorgan. Vol. III pt. 1a. Medieval Secular Monuments: the early castles from the Norman Conquest to 1217* (London, 1991), pp. 158b–9a.^{vii} Patterson, *Scriptorium*, Appx. 1 no. 175.^{viii} NLW, Badminton Deeds, Group 1, 1356 (c. 1205); PM Ch. 57, PM Ch. 1953^{ix} Patterson, *Scriptorium*, Appx. 1 no. 334^x *Ibid.*, no. 170.^{xi} *Ibid.*, no. 228.^{xii} *Ibid.*, no. 201.^{xiii} *Ibid.*, no. 202.^{xiv} PM Ch. 1997.^{xv} Griffiths, 'Native Society', p. 191.^{xvi} Patterson, *Scriptorium*, Appx. 1 no. 357.^{xvii} BL, Harley Ch. 75 A 18, cited in Griffiths, 'Native Society', p. 211.^{xviii} Patterson, *Scriptorium*, Appx. 1 no. 159.^{xix} *Ibid.*, no. 371

corn with small pellets in the angles would undoubtedly be mistaken for that used on the seal of an individual of rather humble status.²⁸ Along with a number of borough towns including Cardiff, Kenfig had been founded by the Anglo-Norman lords of Glamorgan and, despite raids by the Welsh in the 1230s and 1240, the town prospered enough to warrant fourteenth-century ordinances controlling innkeepers and butchers, among others.²⁹ Being closely connected to other towns in south Wales and on a trade-route to Bristol, it is highly unlikely that the leading burgesses who probably commissioned Kenfig's common seal were unaware of contemporary trends in the imagery for urban communities, or could not afford a bespoke matrix. Instead, it implies that variants of the radial motif were considered appropriate for a variety of seal owners, at least within certain localities and at particular times.

Ten seals (16 impressions) used to validate documents relating to Margam Abbey all display a very similar radial motif comprising long, thin arms terminating in a teardrop or rounded shape with distinct 'spikes', that appears to be a stylised representation of teasels radiating from a central hub. This motif has previously been described as an 'escarbuncle' by one cataloguer, significantly (if unintentionally) assigning to it a term that implies a recognised armorial charge.³⁰ All ten seals with this motif belonged to men, eight of whom were from native Welsh families, one of whom was from an Anglo-Norman settler family, and one with a name suggesting Anglo-Welsh origins (Table 11.1). All ten men were active within the Kenfig and Afan areas of Glamorgan, and all impressions of the seals are appended to documents datable to the last decade of the twelfth and first quarter of the thirteenth century.

An obvious conclusion might be that the matrices were the product of one craftsman or workshop that just happened to use a particular variant on the radial motif. This is a possibility, but they were certainly not cast or engraved as a set and there is enough variation to suggest different manufacturers. The seal of Rhys Goch had quite naturalistic teasel-heads and a small central disk (Fig. 11.4, a); that of Alaithur ab Idnerth (Fig. 11.4, b) has a much larger central feature and a frame around the contours of the whole design; while the seal of David Scurlage has noticeably rounded

teasel heads (Fig. 11.4, c).³¹ Rather than a common point of manufacture, it may instead be suggested that the choice of motif was a deliberate one on the part of the seal owners, and one, moreover, that was connected to refined gradations of status within a kinship group and locality.

One of the seals with the teasel motif was owned by Gruffudd ap Cadraut Gillemicel, a member of a family with Irish origins who held land around Kenfig.³² It is of considerable interest to note that the seal of his kinsman Walaveth ap William Gillemicel, includes a clear representation of teasel heads, but in this instance has as a central motif a drawn bow and arrow ready to shoot.³³ The bow and arrow was a motif found on a number of seals from south Wales in this period and has obvious resonances with the famed bowmen of the area. Gruffydd ap Cadraut Gillemicel held land in his own right, but in one quitclaim to Margam Abbey he had as pledge Lleision ap Morgan ap Caradog and the document was validated with the seal of Morgan ap Caradog, lord of Afan and the most powerful native nobleman in the region.³⁴ This attestation of two 'rulers' (to use Huw Pryce's term) indicate that, although Gruffydd was a landholder and owner of a seal, his position within free native society was not of the very highest level, perhaps akin to that which in English terms would be considered a lesser nobleman or member of the knightly class.³⁵

Another 'teasel' seal owner was Rhys Goch, forester of the Anglo-Norman lord of Ogmored and a member of the native Welsh family who controlled the lowlands between Ogmored and Kenfig.³⁶ On a number of occasions he witnessed documents alongside Alaithur ab Idnerth, who with his brother Iorwerth has been described as one of the 'most significant native landowners' in the upland area immediately to the north-west of Margam Abbey.³⁷ Both Alaithur and Iorwerth owned 'teasel' seals, with images and letterforms so similar that the matrices were almost certainly made by the same craftsman (Figs 11.4, b and 11.5).³⁸

In fact all the native Welshmen who owned seals with 'teasel' motifs were members of the landholding and militarily active nobility, the *uchelwyr* ('free men'); they were not however the most powerful within their kinship group or the wider region. All undoubtedly knew each



Fig 11.4. a) Seal of Rhys Goch. Actual size 43 mm. National Library of Wales, Penrice & Margam Ch.1997, c. 1200 × 1208. Photograph: author; b) Seal of Alaithur ab Idnerth. Actual size 40mm. National Library of Wales, Penrice & Margam Ch. 1959, c. 1208; c) seal of David Scurlage. Actual size 31 mm. National Library of Wales, Penrice & Margam Ch. 61, 1202. All images by permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales.

other, as well as the Anglo-Norman 'teasel' seal owner David Scurlage. He held a knight's fee with the obligation of castle-guard at Cardiff, and was a member of a settler family of roughly comparable status to the Welsh owners of seals with the same motif.³⁹ David Scurlage witnessed a document issued by Alaithur ab Idnerth along with Rhys Goch, and like Rhys he acknowledged Morgan ap Caradog as his overlord.⁴⁰ From this evidence it may be proposed that the stylised representation of teasels was used as a sigillographic image to indicate a certain mid-level status within the landholding elite of Glamorgan in the early thirteenth century.

Quite what the image meant is less clear. Teasels were used in the Middle Ages in the cloth-making process and, although there is

currently no evidence of a cloth industry in Glamorgan at this time, Kidwelly in southern Carmarthenshire was a significant centre for textile manufacture in medieval Wales.⁴¹ There were also significant numbers of sheep and pasture rights are frequently mentioned in the documentation, indeed leading to a number of disputes between the seal-owners and Margam Abbey.⁴² Were the teasels perhaps a reference to status through pasture-rights, the ownership of sheep, to the increasingly profitable trade in wool or perhaps even to a previously unknown centre for textile production? The seals with teasel imagery do not provide clear answers to such questions, but by raising them we are compelled to look more closely at the lives of people below the very highest levels of society.

What is certain is that in at least two cases the 'teasel' motif was used across generations in the manner of a more conventional armorial device.⁴³ Gruffudd, brother of Rhys Goch Fychan, may well have been the natural son of the Rhys Goch the elder, and at the very least was closely connected through kinship.⁴⁴ Although details of the seal imagery are different, the overall design is the same. The use of the same device forms a clear visual connection between the two men, and if Gruffudd was not in fact Rhys Goch's son or his paternity was contested, this was a powerful statement about the younger man's claim to membership of the kinship group. Owain, Rhys and Caradog were undoubtedly the sons of the owner of the teasel-motifed-seal, Alaithur ab Idnerth, and were in frequent and often violent dispute about land with Margam Abbey in the 1220s–40s.⁴⁵ The bishop of Llandaff had to intervene on



Fig. 11.5. Seal of Iorwerth ab Idnerth. Actual size 41 mm. National Library of Wales, Penrice & Margam Ch. 1960, 1200. Photograph: author. By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/The National Library of Wales.

more than one occasion, and in about 1231 a final concord was drawn-up between the brothers and the monks of Margam, with the former quitclaiming their rights in various lands and swearing not to enter the monks' grange of Resolfen because of damage they and their men had previously done to Margam's property.⁴⁶ All three brothers appended a seal with a name legend to this document. That of Rhys closely resembles the 'teasel' seals of his father and uncle, albeit with thicker arms and no discernible spikes on the bulbous terminals; the other two seals display more conventional stylised flowers, so similar that they appear to have been made as a set. They do however have the distinctive frames around the arms of the radial device that characterise the images on the seals of their father, uncle and brother. Rhys used his seal again on a deed of 1246, but on that occasion both of his brothers used different ones to those employed on the earlier document.⁴⁷ It may well be that Rhys had a seal, deliberately employing a 'family' motif, by 1231, but his brothers did not and so Margam provided them with matrices for that occasion – copying Rhys's radial motif, but without the nuances of detail.

These examples, all drawn from a modest collection of documents relating to a single monastic house, challenge a number of assumptions. It is clear that sweeping generalisations cannot be made about the use and ownership of seals with geometric or foliate motifs, because a close examination of the material, coupled with prosopographical investigation, reveals that people of high social status and even communities possessed matrices with such designs. Moreover, this study highlights the dangers of retrospectively imposing later taxonomies, such as armigerous language, on the semiotic systems of earlier societies without fully understanding the nuances of the visual culture. Finally, this essay has demonstrated that paying close attention to seals with supposedly 'conventional' motifs enables us at least to ask new questions, even if not always to be able to answer them.

Notes

1 For discussion of 'personal seals' and their definition, see for example E. A. New, *Seals and Sealing Practices*. British Records Association Archives & the User 11 (London, 2010), p. 87. Such a definition is however somewhat problematic. The *sigillum secretum* of twelfth-

and early thirteenth-century bishops often were highly personalised but were used for official business, a good example being that of Nigel, bishop of Ely (d. 1169), *English Episcopal Acta 31: Ely 1109–1197*, ed. N. Karn (Oxford, 2005), pp. cxlvi–cxlvii. Commenting on how to define a person seal, Roger Ellis wrote that to 'aim for absolute consistency could delay indefinitely the publication' of his catalogue, R. Ellis, *Catalogue of Seals in the Public Record Office. Personal Seals, Vol. I* (London, 1978), p. vii n. 1. For the purposes of this paper 'personal seals' are defined as those not identified as governmental, official, pertaining to an office or corporate.

P. D. A. Harvey and A. McGuinness, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (London, 1996), p. 78, estimated that non-heraldic personal seals constitute approximately four-fifths of surviving impressions and matrices from medieval Britain. Of the 3327 medieval seal matrices currently recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme, only 16 are tagged as 'official'. <http://finds.org.uk/database/search/results/q/seal+matrix> accessed 21/06/2013.

- 2 This point has been made by a number of scholars. See for example J. H. Bloom, *English Seals* (London, 1906), p. 185; A. F. McGuinness, 'Non-Armigerous seals and seal-usage in thirteenth-century England' in *Thirteenth Century England vol 5: Proceedings of the Newcastle-Upon-Tyne Conference, 1985*, eds P. R. Cross and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge, 1986), pp. 165–77 at p. 165; Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide*, p. 78; R. A. Linenthal, 'Medieval personal seal matrices', *Recording Medieval Lives*, eds J. Boffey and V. Davis, Harlaxton Medieval Studies XVII (Donnington, 2009), pp. 223–32 at p. 227; New, *Seals and Sealing Practices*, esp. pp. 28–9; J. McEwan, 'The seals of London's governing elite in the thirteenth century', in *Thirteenth Century England XIV*, eds J. Burton, P. R. Schofield and B. Weiler (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 43–59 at p. 43.
- 3 For studies of lower-status seal-owners see for example McGuinness, 'Non-armigerous seals'; T. A. Heslop, 'Peasant seals' in *Medieval England 1066–1485*, ed. E. King (Oxford, 1988), pp. 214–5; P. D. A. Harvey, 'Personal seals in thirteenth-century England' in *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages. Essays presented to John Taylor*, eds I. Wood and G. A. Loud (London & Rio Grande, 1991), pp. 117–27. Scholars who have written about the seals used by those from below the very highest levels of society generally preface their work by suggesting that the scale of the surviving material is an obstacle to research. See for example Harvey, 'Personal Seals', esp. pp. 117–9; Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide*, p. 78.

- 4 For example P. D. A. Harvey's catalogue of seal impressions from the Duchy of Lancaster collections held by The National Archives.
- 5 See for example M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record. England 1066–1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1993), pp. 44–74; D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000–1300* (London and New York, 1992), esp. pp. 242–3; B. M. Bedos-Rezak, 'In search of a semiotic paradigm: the matter of sealing in medieval thought', in *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, eds N. Adams, J. Cherry and J. Robinson (London, 2008), pp. 1–7; B. M. Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2011); McEwan, 'Seals of London's governing elite'; E. A. New, 'Leision ap Morgan makes an impression: seals and the study of medieval Wales', *Welsh History Review* 27:1 (2013), 327–50; P. R. Schofield, 'Seals and the peasant economy in England and Marcher Wales, ca. 1300', in *Medieval Coins and Seals: Constructing Identity, Signifying Power*, ed. S. Solway (Turnhout, forthcoming).
- 6 For example D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000–1300* (London & New York, 1992), esp. pp. 242–6; E. Danbury, 'Queens and powerful women: image and authority', in *Good Impressions. Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, eds N. Adams, J. Cherry and J. Robinson (London, 2008), pp. 17–24.
- 7 See for example C. H. Hunter Blair, 'Armorial upon English Seals from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries', *Archaeologia* 89 (1943), 1–26; M. P. Siddons, 'Welsh Equestrian Seals', *National Library of Wales Journal* 23 (1983–84), 292–318; A. Ailes, 'The knights' alter ego: from equestrian to armorial seal' in *Good Impressions. Image and Authority in Medieval Seals*, eds N. Adams, J. Cherry and J. Robinson (London, 2008) pp. 8–11.
- 8 For example McGuinness, 'Non-armigerous', pp. 172, 174–5; E. New, 'Representation and identity in medieval London: the evidence of seals', in *London and the Kingdom*, eds M. Davies and A. Prescott, Harlaxton Medieval Studies XVI (Stamford, 2008), pp. 246–58, esp. pp. 255–6; J. Cherry, '“Ie sus el nul tel”: no seal like it?', in *Pourquoi les sceaux? La sigillographie nouvel enjeu de l'histoire de l'art*, eds M. Gill and J.-L. Chassel (Lille, 2011), pp. 195–206.
- 9 Animals and birds that serve a canting or allusive purpose are an exception, and frequently have been noted in discussions. See for example Heslop, 'Peasant seals', pp. 214–15 (seal of Ralph Hairun); Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide*, p. 90 (in relation to vernacular legends); New, *Seals and Sealing Practices*, pp. 108–9.
- 10 McGuinness notes that 'employing such terms as 'conventional' is problematic because of the considerable variation within categories such as stylised flowers, and although he uses the term conventional it is always (as here) in inverted commas, McGuinness, 'Non-armigerous', p. 170 and *passim*. 'Miscellaneous Designs and Devices' is the title of the short chapter on non-armorial personal seals in W. de G. Birch, *Seals* (London, 1907). The social classification of these sorts of seal motif is found in for example Heslop, 'Peasant Seals', p. 214; McGuinness, 'Non-armigerous', p. 170.
- 11 'Diverging from a central point or region like rays', "radial, adj. and n.". OED Online. June 2013. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/157224?redirectedFrom=radial> (accessed July 03, 2013).
- 12 Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide*, p. 80. The *Vocabulaire International de la Sigillographie* dismisses large numbers of seals with very different motifs as simply being 'with a device', as for example, no. 232.
- 13 Paul Harvey has advocated such research on a number of occasions, and has made some extremely important observations about how this material could be used. For example, Professor Harvey speculated that a motif repeated across different seals through personal choice may well have also been used for marking property or livestock, Harvey, 'Personal seals', p. 127. See also McGuinness, 'Non-armigerous'.
- 14 This analysis, originally conducted by Dr John McEwan, draws upon the Arts & Humanities Research Council funded *Seals in Medieval Wales* project [project number AH/G010994/1]. The project data-set of seal impressions is recorded from collections of material relating to Wales and the Welsh Marches c. 1150–1550 in the National Library of Wales, the British Library, Bangor University Archives, Cheshire Archives and Local Studies, Gwent Archives, Gwynedd Archives, Hereford Cathedral Archives, Herefordshire Archives and Shropshire Archives, and from the catalogue of seals in the Duchy of Lancaster series compiled by Professor P. D. A. Harvey. The Seals in Medieval Wales project team are grateful to Professor Harvey for making his data available to them for a comparative analysis. Descriptions of the Duchy of Lancaster seals form part of the item-level catalogue available through The National Archives website www.nationalarchives.gov.uk
- 15 For relatively early, but brief, commentary on low-status seals with what are predominantly radial (here described as 'floral') motifs, see R. H. Hilton, 'Gloucester Abbey Leases of the Late Thirteenth Century', in *The English Peasantry in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. R. H. Hilton, (Oxford, 1975), pp. 154–5.
- 16 The social classification of seal-owners through

- the representation of a human has received especial attention in recent years from Brigitte Bedos-Rezak. See Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego Was Imago*, esp. pp. 59–71.
- 17 Seals have long been used for tracing the development of heraldry, with William Dugdale recording seals for this purpose in the seventeenth century, New, *Seals and Sealing Practices*, p. 29. The earliest heraldic seals in Britain are generally considered to date from the mid-twelfth century, A. Ailes, 'Heraldry in twelfth-century England: the evidence', in *England in the Twelfth century. Proceedings of the 1988 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. D. Williams (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 1–16; Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide*, pp. 47–8. D. Crouch, 'The historian, lineage and heraldry 1050–1250', in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England*, eds P. Coss and M. Keen (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 17–38, esp. 28–36, makes some interesting points about the early use of individual and family devices, often using sigillographic evidence, but takes what may be described as a traditional view about the emergence of heraldry.
 - 18 In recent years the complication of how to approach a semiotic system in its evolutionary phase has been noted by a number of scholars. See for example Harvey and McGuinness, *Guide*, pp. 47–8; M. P. Siddons, *The Development of Welsh Heraldry*, Vol. 1 (Aberystwyth, 1991), pp. 13–14.
 - 19 McGuinness, 'Non-armigerous' p. 170
 - 20 N[ational] L[ibrary of] W[ales], P[enrice &] M[argam Ch.] 75. The diameter of the whole seal is 20 mm.
 - 21 D. H. Williams, *Images of Welsh History* (Aberystwyth, 2007), p. 20. The genus *Potentilla* (cinquefoils), characterised by five-lobed leaves and five-petalled flowers, was widely associated with the Five Wounds in medieval England, M. W. Tisdall, *God's Flowers. An Iconography for Foliage Decoration* (Plymouth, 2012), p. 44; C. Fisher, *The Medieval Flower Book* (London, 2007), pp. 9, 38.
 - 22 Williams, *Images of Welsh History* p. 20.
 - 23 Mygnoth's seal would appear to be a remarkably early example of sophisticated Christocentric devotion in a sigillographic context. See E. A. New, 'Christological personal seals and Christocentric devotion in later medieval England and Wales', *Antiquaries Journal* 82 (2002), 47–68.
 - 24 NLW PM 176, 177 (1265)
 - 25 Clive H. Knowles, 'Clare, Gilbert de, seventh earl of Gloucester and sixth earl of Hertford (1243–1295)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5438, accessed 6 May 2013]
 - 26 A twelfth-century example of sigillographic imagery that deliberately subverts the expectations raised by a superficially standard image is the seal of Geoffrey, 'the abbot', seneschal and sheriff of Leicester. Here the equestrian figure on Geoffrey's seal hold a crosier in reference to the owner's nickname. D. Crouch, 'Humour and identity in the twelfth century', in *Grant Risee?: The Medieval Comic Presence*, eds A. P. Tudor and A. Hindley, *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe 11* (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 213–24.
 - 27 NLW, PM 198 s.2, 199 s.2, 200 s.2, 2059 seal 2. The seal features without comment on the design in D. H. Williams, *Welsh History through Seals* (Cardiff, 1982), p. 25 and fig. 51 and Williams, *Images of Welsh History*, p. 26 fig. 77.
 - 28 Harvey and McGuinness comment that the design was of a type 'found on many contemporary personal seals', *Guide*, p. 108.
 - 29 R. A. Griffiths, 'The Medieval Boroughs of Glamorgan and Medieval Swansea', in *Glamorgan County History*, vol. III: *The Middle Ages*, ed. T. B. Pugh (Cardiff, 1971), pp. 333–77 at pp. 338, 350–1.
 - 30 D. H. Williams, 'Catalogue of Seals from the Penrice and Margam Charters' (Unpublished, available in the National Library of Wales South Reading Room). By using a heraldic term, William inadvertently makes clear the problem that scholars face when attempting retrospectively to impose later taxonomies
 - 31 NLW, PM 1998, 1959, 61.
 - 32 NLW, PM 1965 (1175×1225); M. Griffiths, 'Native society on the Anglo-Norman frontier: the evidence of the Margam Charters', *Welsh History Review* 14:2 (1988), 179–216 at p. 194
 - 33 Williams, *Images of Welsh History* fig. 41, NLW, Badminton Deeds, Group 1, 1356 (c. 1205); also on PM 57, PM 1953.
 - 34 NLW, PM 92; Griffiths, 'Native society', p. 196
 - 35 H. Pryce (ed.), *The Acts of Welsh Rulers: 1120–1283* (Cardiff, 2005), p. 1, includes both major and minor dynasties and 'individuals... who exercised some measure of authority' in his definition of native rulers in pre-Conquest Wales.
 - 36 Griffiths, 'Native society', p. 191; NLW, PM 1997
 - 37 Griffiths, 'Native society', p. 187
 - 38 NLW, PM 1954, 1959, Alaithur ab Idnert (Ythenard)); NLW, PM 1960 Iorwerth (Iorued) ab Idnert (Ythenard).
 - 39 He sealed NLW, PM 61, 2016. L. D. Nicholl, *The Normans in Glamorgan, Gower and Kidweli* (Cardiff, 1936), p. 136; *RCAHMW Inventory of the Ancient Monuments of Glamorgan. Vol. III pt. 1a. Medieval Secular Monuments: the early castles from the Norman Conquest to 1217* (London, 1991), pp. 20a, 158b–9a.

- 40 RCAHMW *Inventory of the Ancient Monuments of Glamorgan*, pp. 20a, 158b–9a. It has been suggested that David Scurlage was not entirely happy with having Morgan ap Caradog as overlord. Rhys Goch refers to Morgan ap Caradog as his overlord in NLW, PM Ch. 1997.
- 41 M. L. Ryder, 'Fascinating Fullonum', *Circaea. The Journal of the Association for Environmental Archaeology* 11:1 (1994 for 1993), 23–31, esp. 26–30; R. I. Jack, 'The cloth industry in medieval Wales', *Welsh History Review* 10 (1980–1), 447–50.
- 42 Griffiths, 'Native society', p. 188.
- 43 P. Coss, 'Knights, esquires and the origins of social gradations in England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th Ser 5 (1995), 155–78, provides an interesting example of how the motif on one seal – in this case a bow and arrow – formed the genesis of an armorial bearing.
- 44 It is of course possible that he is described by a fraternal relationship rather than a patronymic because he was not the natural son of Rhys Goch the elder.
- 45 Griffiths, 'Native society', pp. 188, 194.
- 46 NLW, PM 2056 (Patterson dat. 1231 × 1250; Griffiths date 'no later than 1231')
- 47 NLW, PM 145.

Memorialising the Glorious Past. Thirteenth-century seals from English cathedral priories and their artistic contexts

Markus Späth

Modern research on medieval seals has always stressed the power of an image to act as a sign of authenticity. Thus iconographical patterns have been assessed according to their ability to persuade others to believe the sealed message

and to accept the seal image as a representation of its holder. But sealing in the Middle Ages was not only about creating a representative image. It was also about the visual and material portrayal of the seal holder's identity



Fig. 12.1. (left) Obverse of the 3rd common seal of Canterbury Cathedral Priory, impression of 1533, red wax, 94 × 94 mm, Kew, National Archives: E 25/25 (© The National Archives).

Fig. 12.2. (right) Reverse of the 3rd common seal of Canterbury Cathedral Priory (details and credits see Fig. 12.1).

and the ability of the medium to reproduce faithfully that same identity.¹ Since early Scholasticism, Christ's Incarnation following the Annunciation was considered as an act of sealing and man was thought to be an impression from God's matrix.² The shaping of a three-dimensional image by impressing a stamp into a soft material like wax was a key aspect of a cultural technique, which was considered to be quasi-sacred. But how could corporations, which started using seals for validating their charters from the eleventh century onwards, reproduce 'incarnate-like' their abstract identity in a three-dimensional medium? The large number of corporate seals surviving from the later Medieval Ages in the Latin West bears witness to an enormous variety and heterogeneity of artistic solutions.³

One possibility in constructing corporate identity within a seal was to memorialise the celebrated past of the holding institution in both, visual and haptic form. From the high Middle Ages onwards this option was mainly taken-up by monastic houses which could – or at least pretended to – trace back their origins beyond recorded times. Among monastic common seals visually recalling their distinguished history, those from thirteenth century-England are the most remarkable in medieval Europe. Elaborate compositions in the smallest dimensions emerged from blending figurative imagery with micro-architectural settings.⁴ This artistic strategy was not only limited to iconographic appeal. In fact, this memory could only be materialised – as I will argue – through a sophisticated process involving the production 'in bodily-form' of a three-dimensional wax impression.

My paper will address this phenomenon by examining thirteenth-century common seals from English cathedral priories.⁵ I will focus on outstanding examples such as those of Canterbury and Ely in order to sketch major lines of developments within an environment, which was unique in medieval European church history: Convents of Benedictine monks serving the diocesan mother church were an English peculiarity stretching back to Anglo-Saxon times.⁶ For the questions raised here the seals of monastic cathedral priories provide excellent evidence in various circumstances. Firstly, their corporate identity was constituted by a long history with many changes and disruptions as a result of their

ambivalent status as both monastic community and cathedral chapter. Secondly, their visual culture is much better preserved than that of other monastic houses in England because of their institutional continuity as cathedral chapters beyond the Reformation.⁷ This latter fact is essential to my approach, as their elaborate seals were part of a much wider artistic context rather than that of mere stereotypical seal imagery.

Setting up the model: Christ Church Canterbury

Probably the earliest seal that was designed to serve as a material storage of memory for a monastic house is the third common seal of the cathedral priory of Christ Church Canterbury. Around 1232/33 the monks decided to replace their second common seal from the mid-twelfth century and commissioned a set of matrices to impress a two-sided seal of 94 mm diameter (Figs 12.1 and 12.2).⁸ This seal continued the Anglo-Norman tradition of its predecessor in representing a monastic community through the image of an ecclesiastical building in which numerous human figures appear.⁹ Yet, as both sides of the third common seal are of equal size and therefore appearing together in a coin-like shape, the architectural setting on the obverse is doubled through a similar image on the reverse. The most innovative feature of this seal, however, was a new sealing technology that developed in the 1230s, which not only allowed the impression of human figures on to the seal's surfaces, but also permitted their incorporation behind the façades and within the wax corpus.

The entire pictorial field of the seal's obverse (Fig. 12.1) is thereby filled with a complex representation of a church and is surrounded by a legend identifying the cathedral's monastic chapter as the seal's holder.¹⁰ The perspective chosen by the artist suggests a view towards the west front of a basilica-type building. The image is dominated by a massive rectangular crossing tower with a large central spire and four pinnacles at each corner; this architectural façade is in turn framed by two censing angels descending from heaven. Adjacent to both sides of this tower is an annex with eaves, which terminates at its outer side in a minor tower topped by a similar, but smaller, set of spire and adjacent pinnacles. On the axis of the central crossing tower, however, a double-storied

façade of a building with higher nave and narrower aisles projects into the foreground. At a first glance this elaborate composition suggests that the beholder is looking onto a cathedral church from the west.

This architectural setting is housed by a number of human figures: in the triangular gable above the closed portal appears the half-length-figure of Christ, flanked by his monogram *IC / XC*. He is holding a crosier in his left hand and blessing the beholder with his right hand. The tiny inscription *EST DOMVS H XPI*, consisting of letters less than 2 mm in height along the eave's moulding, proclaims Christ's patronage over this church. In contrast to the depiction of the Saviour, which is in very low relief on the façade, four heads in high relief emerge from the deeply recessed windows of the lateral towers. While the *en-face* male heads in the oculi of the upper tier are fairly generic, the two figures in the rectangular lower windows, both wearing mitres, have a clearly clerical appeal. Tiny inscriptions on the arches around their heads identify them as Ælpheah (*S ELPHEGV*) on the left and as Dunstan (*S DUNSTAN[us]*) on the right and thus as prominent saintly archbishops from the cathedral priory's Anglo-Saxon past.

The reverse's pictorial field (Fig. 12.2) is equally dominated by a building, pretending to be the representation of a church built with a cross-shaped ground plan. While a gabled façade of three storeys projects into the foreground, this edifice is complemented by lateral annexes of slightly lower height but equally lavish architectural design in the back. The figurative imagery of this side of the seal even tells a whole pictorial narrative, the dramatic martyrdom of Thomas Becket that took place in Canterbury Cathedral at Christmas 1170.¹¹ Through the said left portal, two knights enter the church, forming the rear-guard of the assassins. In the room behind the double-porch of the central façade their front man is already striking the kneeling archbishop's head. Next to Becket stands a monk or cleric holding a processional cross – perhaps Edward Grim as the eyewitness and chronicler of this event¹² – while two clergy men appear inside the right porch, gesturing in despair. Moreover, the narrative of Becket's passion continues into the vertical axis of the building, showing his ascension into Heaven on the two upper levels.

On an iconographical level, corporate identity of the monks of Christ Church was represented by housing their major patron saints in a setting of ecclesiastical architecture. Concerning the figurative imagery, the obverse is clearly dedicated to the memory of the key figures of Canterbury Cathedral's Anglo-Saxon past (Fig. 12.1). Apart from Christ, to whom the cathedral's high altar was dedicated from the time of its foundation by St Augustine,¹³ the two mitred heads identified by inscriptions refer to Dunstan (held office 960–88) and Ælpheah (Latinised Alphege, held office 1005–12) as two saintly archbishops from the Anglo-Saxon past. While the earlier was the key figure of the monastic revival in late tenth century-England, the latter was even venerated as a martyr as a result of his violent death in the Danish raids just after the turn of the millennium.¹⁴ Their strong veneration at Christ Church is mirrored by the elevation of their bodily remains to altars placed directly to either side of the high altar.¹⁵ Even Lanfranc, the first Norman archbishop and the radical exciser of so much of Canterbury's Anglo-Saxon pantheon, did not touch this liturgical arrangement, which therefore continued to exist until the Reformation.¹⁶ In his *Instructio novitiarum secundum consuetudinem ecclesie Cantuariensis* he even promoted this setting by defining it as the initial point for the instruction of new novices: immediately after their *professio* on St Jerome's feast, they were expected to prostrate before the high altar, before turning to St Alphege's tomb to the left of the altar and then to St Dunstan's on its right.¹⁷ Therefore the iconographical arrangement on the seal's obverse projects an imaginary floor-plan of the cathedral's liturgical centre, whose memory was already absorbed by the novices in their very first steps of learning.

The imagery on the reverse, however, reflects the fundamental change of institutional identity caused by the murder of archbishop Thomas Becket in the cathedral at Christmas 1170 (Fig. 12.2). Even though this saintly archbishop had numerous quarrels with the monastic community inherited from his predecessor Theobald, he soon became an enlightened figure in the monks' collective memory as these conflicts escalated under his successors.¹⁸ Hardly surprisingly, either parties, that is the archbishops of Canterbury and the convent of Christ Church as their cathedral

Fig. 12.3. Tombstone of Bruno presbyter, c. 1200, limestone, 219 × 92 cm, cloister of Hildesheim Cathedral (© author).



Fig. 12.4. Reverse of the third common seal of Canterbury Cathedral Priory, impression of 1232 × 1233, red wax, fragment, 94 × 94 mm, Paris, Archives nationales: J 461 No. 9 (© Archives nationales de France).

chapter, had a strong interest in controlling a cult which originated within the immediacy of their shared church and from there had spread throughout medieval Europe within less than two decades. For both, the articulation of claims to authority as well as the distribution of Becket's cult, visual artistic media played a crucial role.¹⁹ By means of creating new architecture, the monks managed, however, to incorporate entirely Becket's body within their church and thereby successfully to defeat the

archbishop's attempts to build a new cathedral at Lambeth.²⁰ In the context of the rebuilding of Canterbury Cathedral after the fire of 1174, the monks encouraged the construction of the Trinity Chapel, undertaken in lavish Early Gothic style in the 1180s. This annex to the east of the cathedral's old sanctuary was intended to house the new martyr's relics, which could, however, only be translated there on 7 July 1220 when this new part of the church was eventually dedicated, after settlement was reached with archbishop Stephan Langton.²¹ This made the site the focus of one of the most popular pilgrimages in later medieval Europe under the monks' custody.²²

While this tremendous controversy is echoed in the iconography of the archiepiscopal seals ever since Hubert Walter introduced the martyrdom-motif for the reverse's design in 1193,²³ one wonders why the monks of Christ Church did not follow Walter's lead until the early 1230s. When the chapter's monks did eventually introduce this motif, they even expanded it to a whole pictorial narrative of Becket's passion told on three pictorial registers: in the gallery of round-headed arches above the crime scene two angels are carrying Becket's



soul towards the Saviour, who appears within a large and deeply recessed trefoil in the gable (Fig. 12.2). Even within the rich imagery of this saint's sacrifice across various artistic media of that time, this was unique in its expression and sophistication. That said, the motif of a soul transcending into Heaven can, however, be found in other artistic media such as sculpture, in particular within sepulchral contexts. The lavishly decorated tombstone of the capitular canon Bruno in Hildesheim Cathedral from around 1200 shows a strikingly similar three-partite composition (Fig. 12.3).²⁴ The narration of Bruno's ascension begins with the preparation of his dead body by his fellow canons in the lower section and is then continued by the central scene of two angels carrying his soul to the Saviour in the uppermost field framed by a trefoil arch. The striking similarity between the two ascension scenes, set in elaborate architectural frameworks in rather distant cathedral chapters and at about the same time, raises the question of the importance of artistic strategies in incorporating memory within the visual culture of episcopal churches *c.* 1200.

For this reason the Canterbury seal's micro-architecture needs to be examined as much as does its mere iconographical appearance. There can be hardly any doubt that the architectural settings represent Canterbury Cathedral, as clearly indicated both by the inscription *EST DOMVS H XPI* below the Saviour on the obverse and the insertion of Becket's Martyrdom into the church on the reverse. Yet the visual evidence is much more complicated, as the images on both sides obviously do not show the same church: in fact, neither of the buildings represented on the seal's obverse and reverse closely resembles Canterbury Cathedral as it would have appeared in the early thirteenth century. The variety of styles shown in the church's actual superstructure at that time, which ranged from the late Romanesque in the nave to the early Gothic in the choir of William of Sens and William the Englishman, was at odds with the homogeneity of the seal's micro-architectures. They seem to be much more indebted to the most cutting-edge church design in England around 1230.²⁵ Even if one takes into account that the medieval concept of copying architecture did not require an exact transfer of forms and designs,²⁶ the many inconsistencies of the two micro-architectural

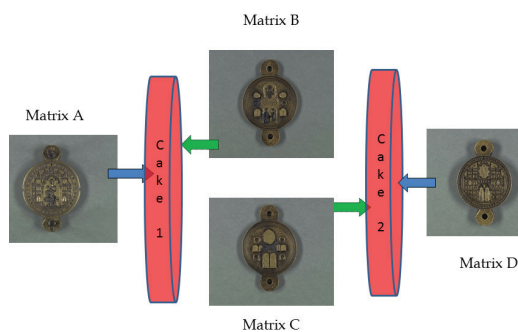


Fig. 12.5. Reconstruction of the four-partite matrix for the common seal of Southwick Priory, *c.* 1260, copper alloy, plates *c.* 73 × 73 mm, Winchester, HRO: 153M88/1 (© photos: Hampshire Record Office; reconstruction drawing: author).



Fig. 12.6. Inscription on the rim of the second common seal of Ely Cathedral Priory, impression of 1410 August 23, green wax, 83 × 83 mm, Westminster Abbey: WAM 7933 (© Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey).



Fig. 12.7. Obverse of the second common seal of Ely Cathedral Priory (details and credits see Fig. 12.6).



Fig. 12.8. Reverse of the second common seal of Ely Cathedral Priory (details and credits see Fig. 12.6)

structures point to the fact that they were not intended to 'portray' the Cathedral in a modern sense. In particular, the obverse seal image rather bears a strong resemblance to the spectacular screen façades built at Salisbury or Wells Cathedral from the 1220s onwards. Their surfaces are fissured with numerous niches, recesses and other openings in order to house extensive sculptural programmes.²⁷ These arrangements created, as Paul Binski has recently pointed out, an image of the *universitas* of the church.²⁸ Thus the micro-architectural design on the Canterbury seal cannot solely be read as a representation of a local institution, but rather as a symbolic one of the universal *ecclesia* in thirteenth-century imagination.

Reviving memory: the process of sealing

In this regard one has to ask how the seal's figures and scenes were placed in relation to its architectural framework in order to memorialise and to help the sigillants to commit the priory's past to memory. In the oldest surviving impression of this seal attached to a charter of 1232/33 the obverse nowadays provides irritating evidence: both, the martyrdom scene and the bust of the Saviour, appear as isolated images, whereas the elaborate façade is missing (Fig. 12.4).²⁹ Thus it becomes fairly clear that this figurative imagery has not been impressed on the seal's surface, but was rather incorporated into a separate cake of wax upon which a front cake containing the façade was placed that is now lost. The creation of a seal out of two cakes of wax bears witness to an extraordinary technical innovation taking place in the environment of religious houses in south-eastern England throughout the thirteenth century. In order to impress such a two-layered seal a whole set of matrices was necessary.³⁰ Although the matrices for the Canterbury seal are lost today, a comparable set of stamps has survived from the Augustinian Priory of St Mary's in Southwick, Hampshire, which was engraved around 1260 on four plates of copper (Fig. 12.5).³¹ They enabled the monks to impress both sides of the two wax cakes before joining them together with a metal loop, probably made of lead, such as seen in the earliest impression of the Canterbury seal (Fig. 12.4). Thus figures and scenes such as the Saviour

and the martyrdom of St Thomas appear behind a real façade in portals and windows, thereby creating a three-dimensional micro-architectural space.

The common seal was therefore a medium which made it possible not only to depict, but also to make incarnate a monastic community's history in its alterations. The murder of Becket in 1170 was such a far-reaching event that, as already noted, we might wonder why it had become part of the chapter's seal imagery only after 1230. There is, however, significant coincidence between the first use of the third common seal and the launch of the forged *Magna carta Sanctae Thomae*, which purported to be a charter by the saintly archbishop and granting major liberties to the monks of Christ Church.³² Through this new sealing technology the community could underline the fact that the donor's bodily remains were incorporated in their own church. The complicated and multi-levelled process of the seal's production directs us to the contemporary expectation that historical memories were not only thereby evoked in the beholder of the completed seal, but were also in those involved in the sealing. Each time, the matrices had to be brought into the right order, impressed in the correct way on the two wax cakes, which had then to be bound together to form the seal's corpus. Moreover, at the very end of the process the sigillant(s) had to testify that the wax really had the capacity to represent all that was required of it. In fact, some of the surviving impressions of the Canterbury seal bear a legend of hardly 4 millimetres in height around the rim running clockwise if seen from the obverse.³³

*SIT MICHI CAUSA MERA STILVS APTVS
LITERA VERA [V]
CIRCVMSPECTA SERA TENOR VTILIS
INTEGRA CERA*

'May you be my unadulterated cause, appropriate style, true word, encompassing bolt, advantageous sense, intact wax'.

These enigmatic hexameters could easily be associated with Becket's glory as a martyr, who was also praised in the metric legend of the reverse.³⁴ Further, the rim's circumscription refers to a much broader metaphorical impact of sealing, one issuing from the theological discourse of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.³⁵ As the metric phrase of the 'true word' (*LITERA VERA*) is also echoed in the 'intact wax' (*INTEGRA CERA*), the

inscription, the application of which was an involved process employing a special matrix of the kind that survives for the common seal of Boxgrove Priory in Sussex,³⁶ attested to the integrity of the object. Hence only an intact impression guaranteed the legibility of the inscription and the completeness of the incorporated memories.

Transforming a model: the second common seal of Ely Cathedral Priory

This idea was also employed by the monks of the cathedral priory of St Etheldreda and St Peter at Ely, when they decided to commission matrices for their new conventual seal in the 1280s to replace the first recorded common seal, which dated from the twelfth century.³⁷ Instead of the old-fashioned, single-sided seal, the monks acquired a fashionable, double-sided seal with a diameter of 83 mm, whose impressions bear a circumscription about the rim (Fig. 12.6).³⁸

+ PETRVS ET EDELDREDA MOLLIS SVB
TEGMINE CERE ELY SECRETA CELARE
SIMVL STATVERE

'Peter and Etheldreda have jointly decided to cover the secrets of Ely under the cover of the soft wax'.

The legend suggests that the cathedral's two patron saints, Peter and Etheldreda, considered the seal as a safe treasury for the church of Ely's *secreta*. Whatever this term meant precisely, it clearly points to the fact that medieval seals were not only perceived as a medium of representational display, but rather one of internal storage.³⁹ In this case the term seems to address the monks as insiders, and therefore as possessors of a deeper knowledge of Ely's long-lasting and most vicissitudinous past, dating back until Anglo-Saxon times.⁴⁰ The community was founded around 673 as a double monastery by the Anglo-Saxon queen Æthelthryth (Latinised as Etheldreda, d. 679), who retired from court to devote herself to a monastic life. In the course of its turbulent history, the abbey was raided by the Danes in the late ninth century and only re-established as a male Benedictine house in 970. Finally it was turned into a cathedral priory in 1109, serving as the see for a newly created bishopric covering most parts of Cambridgeshire. Despite these significant changes in Ely's

fortunes, the thirteenth-century monks enjoyed a rich documentary as well as visual culture, both of which allowed them to access memory regarding their institution's glorious past to a degree not found in other long-established English monastic houses.⁴¹

Many of these milestones in the community's history are embodied in the images of Ely's two patron saints, Etheldreda and Peter, to each of whom one side of this coin-like seal is dedicated (Figs 12.7 and 12.8). They are each placed in the centre of a lavish architectural setting, the design of which appears – unlike in the instance of the Canterbury seal – almost identical in design on both sides. As the circumscription addresses the corporate act of the saints in keeping Ely's secrets, one might ask if this was part of an artistic strategy by a talented goldsmith, perhaps one located within the cathedral's precinct.⁴² Even if the impressions of this common seal consist of only one cake of wax – and therefore witnesses some reduction of technological complexity relative to Canterbury's third seal (Figs 12.1, 12.2 and 12.4) – its material appearance is still sophisticated: while the circumscription's postulates the seal's bodily character, the real wax corpus has only a modest height of just 7 millimetres. The impressed images on both sides, however, appear in fairly high relief although they hardly project beyond the seal's surface.

On the obverse (Fig. 12.7), the standing figure of Etheldreda appears as a crowned abbess in a central trefoil arch, assisted by two male figures under similar architectural framework, which is, however, clearly reduced in size and partially in elaboration. To her right appears a king, while to her left a clearly younger, uncrowned man in courtly fashion is shown holding a falcon. Unlike in the Canterbury seal (Figs 12.1 and 12.2) there are no internal legends in the pictorial field to identify the persons represented. Yet the identification of Etheldreda's assistants might have been possible even for a wider contemporary public due to a widespread propagation of her hagiographical model as a saintly queen living in chastity.⁴³ The key work in this tradition was the *Liber Eliensis*, a hybrid work written in the 1170s and oscillating between historiography and hagiography.⁴⁴ Accordingly the two figures assisting Etheldreda most probably refer to her two husbands, prince Tonberht of

Gyrwe – who died young – and king Ecgrith of Northumberland (who reigned 670–85), from whom she later divorced in order to dedicate herself to a religious life. The end of this conversion – supervised by the saintly archbishop Wilfrid of York – is marked by her foundation of a double monastery on the Isle of Ely in 673, which she ruled as the first abbess. Beyond that, Etheldreda was chiefly remembered for establishing a dynastic tradition in the abbey by admitting not only her sisters Seaxburh and Wihtburh, but also their daughters and grand-daughters, who succeeded her in abbacy. Their burial places in the church became the focus of a flourishing cult.⁴⁵ Hence the imagery on the obverse is clearly dedicated to the memory of Ely's foundation. However, unlike the lineage of archbishops on the Canterbury seal, the Ely seal does not promote dynastic succession but rather intends to prove Etheldreda's chastity by presenting her husbands as witnesses to her ascetic life.

On the reverse (Fig. 12.8), Saint Peter appears in an almost identical architectural framework, where he is assisted by a bishop offering a blessing to his right and, to his left, a king holding a scroll. As on the obverse there are no internal inscriptions to name those figures represented, thus leaving only the Apostle easily identifiable, at least to a modern viewer. However, the tradition compiled in the *Liber Eliensis* links this composition to the aforementioned re-foundation of the abbey in the later tenth century. The chronicle lavishly commemorates both king Edgar (who reigned Mercia and Wessex from 957, and was king of the English 959–75) and the saintly bishop Æthelwold of Winchester (who held office 963–84), who re-consecrated the abbey under the patronage of Saint Peter.⁴⁶ These major architects of the monastic revival in Anglo-Saxon England can clearly therefore be identified as the figures assisting the Apostle on the Ely seal.⁴⁷ Moreover, even the five human figures appearing in a boat in the lower marginal register of the architectural setting might refer to the time of re-foundation: the *Liber Eliensis* illustrates the achievements of the reforming-abbot Byrhtnoth, among which is the violent theft of the relics of Saint Wihtburh in order to incorporate the last missing sister of Etheldreda within Ely's pantheon of saints. In this episode Byrhtnoth

is said to have escaped with his accomplices on a boat over the waterways of the Fens,⁴⁸ recalling the topos of Ely's location on an inaccessible *insula* there. Thus, as in the Canterbury model, Ely's new common seal enabled the monks to imprint the memory of two milestones in their long history, which were obviously considered to be essential to their corporate identity.⁴⁹

This finally leads us to the role of the micro-architectural settings in the imagery of this seal. In contrast to the two rather distinct church façades appearing on the surfaces of the Canterbury example, the architectural presentation is all but identical on both the obverse and reverse of the Ely common seal (Figs 12.7 and 12.8). Details such as the trefoil-arcades with their elaborate canopies adorned with crockets and crops testify to an awareness of up-to-date developments in the just-emerging *Decorated Style*.⁵⁰ However, similarities between the architectural setting of the seal and contemporary building design are not only limited to details, but rather extend to the superstructure itself. On both sides of the Ely seal, the highly risen, open triple-arcades are crowned by spectacular sets of roofs and towers. They barely resemble the layout of any contemporary church building, but rather suggest the monumental shrine bases and the tombs of great ecclesiastics and lay magnates, erected in the interior of so many thirteenth-century English churches.⁵¹ At Ely, bishop Hugh of Northwold (in office 1229–54), rebuilt the old Romanesque sanctuary of the cathedral giving the cult of St Etheldreda and her saintly sisters and nieces a new splendid setting. His intention was to make this church compatible with the flourishing cults of recently canonised bishops in other contemporary English cathedrals.⁵² Although the new seal's matrices were carved in the early 1280s when there was no significant construction work underway on the precinct of Ely Cathedral, its micro-architectural settings, however, bear witness to the monks' knowledge of recent developments in what Nicola Coldstream has called the 'illuminated architecture' of the Decorated Style.⁵³

In the Ely example, the overall presence of architecture had the capacity to balance the key roles of Etheldreda and Peter in the hierarchy of Ely's pantheon of saints. In this regard, the seal became the model for many monastic common seals in the fourteenth century,

such as the second common seal of nearby Peterborough Abbey.⁵⁴ But memorialising the glorious past of Ely cathedral priory was not only a question of images on the surface, but rather one of the seal's material appearances. Only when the matrices for both picture fields were jointly impressed into the wax, did the seal cover the 'secrets' of the church of Ely, as the circumscription around the rim explicitly points out.

Notes

- 1 B. Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego Was Imago. Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2010).
- 2 Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego*, pp. 186–93; from the art historical point of view: T. Dale, 'The Individual, the Resurrected Body, and Romanesque Portraiture: The Tomb of Rudolf von Schwaben in Merseburg', *Speculum* 77 (2002), 707–43 at 720–1.
- 3 B. Bedos-Rezak, 'Ego, Ordo, Communitas. Seals and the Medieval Semiotics of Personality (1200–1350)', in M. Späth, *Die Bildlichkeit korporativer Siegel im Mittelalter. Kunstgeschichte und Geschichte im Gespräch* (Cologne, 2009), pp. 47–64, in particular at 54–64.
- 4 P. D. A. Harvey and M. McGuinness, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (Toronto, 1996), pp. 99–107; T. A. Heslop, 'The Conventual Seals of Canterbury Cathedral', in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Canterbury before 1220*, eds N. Coldstream, P. Draper and R. Gem (Leeds, 1982), pp. 94–100 at p. 97; M. Späth, 'Siegelbild und Kathedralgotik. Die Ästhetik der Siegel englischer Kathedraalklöster zwischen Architektur Rezeption, Bilderzählung und Poesie', *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 37 (2010), 47–71; *idem*, 'Mikroarchitektur zwischen Repräsentation und Identitätsstiftung: Die Siegelbilder englischer Klöster und Kathedraalkapitel im 13. Jahrhundert', in *Mikroarchitektur im Mittelalter. Ein gattungsübergreifendes Phänomen zwischen Realität und Imagination*, eds U. Albrecht and C. Kratzke (Leipzig, 2008), pp. 253–77.
- 5 I thank Phillipp Schofield and his project team for the kind invitation to present and publish this paper as well as for the thoughtful editing of my paper. I am also indebted to Adrian Ailes and Matthew Sillence for reading of earlier versions and their comments. This paper is part of a larger research project on the imagery of late medieval common seals funded by the Volkswagen Foundation.
- 6 J. Greatrex, 'The English Monastic Cathedrals and the Rule of St Benedict', *Regula Benedicti Studia* 3/4 (1975), 89–99.
- 7 P. Binski, *Becket's Crown. Art and Imagination in Gothic England 1170–1300* (New Haven and London, 2004); see also B. Abou-el-Haj, 'Artistic integration inside the cathedral precinct: social consensus outside?' in *Artistic integration in Gothic buildings*, eds V. Chieffo Raguin, K. Brush and P. Draper (Toronto, 1995), pp. 214–35.
- 8 This seal is recorded in the two most important catalogues on British medieval monastic seals: W. de Gray Birch, *Catalogue of seals in the department of manuscripts in the British Museum*, 6 vols (London, 1887–1910), at vol. 1, no. 1373–8, and R. Ellis, *Catalogue of Seals in the Public Record Office, vol. 1: Monastic Seals*, (London, 1986), no. M 166. The first known impression dates of about 1232/33, see n. 23. There is a long-lasting tradition of its impressions until the sealing of the convent's acknowledgement of Supremacy to King Henry VIII in 1534: Kew, The National Archives, E 25/25.
- 9 Essential on the tradition of the three medieval common seals from Christ Church: Heslop, 'Conventual Seals', and M. Späth, 'Architectural Representation and Monastic Identity: The Medieval Seal Images of Christchurch, Canterbury', in *Image, Memory, Devotion. Liber Amicorum Paul Crossley*, eds Z. Opačić and A. Timmermann (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 255–63, see there for reproductions of the first (fig 1) and second common seal (fig. 2).
- 10 The inscription reads:
*SIGILLVM: ECCLESIE: XPI [sti: can]
TVARIE: PRIME: SEDIS: BRITANN[ie].*
- 11 Among many publications on the rich iconographical tradition of Becket's martyrdom see recently: R. Gameson, 'The early imagery of Thomas Becket', in *Pilgrimage. The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan*, eds C. Morris and P. Roberts (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 46–89.
- 12 Gameson, 'Early imagery', pp. 53–4.
- 13 N. Brooks, 'The Anglo-Saxon Cathedral Community, 597–1070', *A History of Canterbury Cathedral*, eds P. Collinson, N. Ramsey and M. Sparks (Oxford, 1995), pp. 1–37 here at p. 3.
- 14 A. Gransden, *Historical writing in England*, 2 vols (Ithaca and London, 1983) at vol. 1, pp. 127–31, on the hagiographical as well as historiographical tradition in Canterbury.
- 15 On the liturgical setting see recently T. Tatton-Brown, 'Canterbury and the architecture of pilgrimage shrines in England', in Morris and Roberts (eds), *Pilgrimage*, pp. 90–107, at p. 91 and p. 105–6, and B. J. Nilson, *Cathedral shrines of medieval England* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 67–8.
- 16 Binski, *Becket's Crown*, p. 98.
- 17 *The monastic constitutions of Lanfranc*, ed. D. Knowles, rev. C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford, 2002), p. 202: *In crastino igitur sancti Ieromini principium sumat temporis traditionis huius doctrina. In chorum ingressus, si solus fuerit ante gradus prostratus ante*

- magnum altare ibi incuratur in curta uenia quamdiu primus sonitus pulsatur [...]. Statim audito signo a priore erigat se et procedat modicum uersus sinistrum ante altare sancti Alphegi [...], et signo iterum audito [...], erigat se [...] et procedat ad dextram [...] ante altare sancti Dunstani ubi sicut prius incuratus [...].*
- 18 Among the numerous publications on this subject matter, I highlight C.R. Cheney, 'Magna carta Beati Thome. another Canterbury forgery', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 36 (1963), 1–26.
 - 19 Most recently among the vast amount of publications on this issue: Binski, *Becket's Crown*, chap. 1, pp. 3–27; M. F. Hearn, 'Canterbury Cathedral and the Cult of Thomas Becket', *Art Bulletin* 26 (1994), 19–54; S. Blick, 'Reconstructing the Shrine of saint Thomas Becket, Canterbury Cathedral', in *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles*, eds S. Blick and R. Tekippe (Leiden, 2005), vol. 1, pp. 405–41.
 - 20 Cheney, 'Magna carta', 8–9; Binski, *Becket's Crown*, p. 36.
 - 21 Binski, *Becket's Crown*, pp. 16–27; P. Draper, 'Interpretations of the rebuilding of Canterbury Cathedral, 1174–1186', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 56 (1997), 184–203; idem, *The Formation of English Gothic Architecture and Identity* (New Haven and London, 2006), pp. 13–33. Frank Druffner's thoughtful study of this building campaign, idem, *Der Chor der Kathedrale von Canterbury. Architektur und Geschichte bis 1220* (Egelsbach, 1994), deserves much more attention that it has so far received from English-speaking scholarship.
 - 22 Tatton-Brown, 'Canterbury', p. 95–6; B. Dobson, 'The Monks of Canterbury in the Later Middle Ages, 1220–1540', in Collinson, Ramsey and Sparks (eds), *History*, pp. 69–153 here at pp. 68–70.
 - 23 Birch, *Catalogue I*, no. 1187. Under his tenure the conflict with the monks reached its climax, see Cheney, 'Magna carta', 6–8.
 - 24 Späth, 'Siegelbild', 61–2.
 - 25 Draper, *Formation*, pp. 46–7 and pp. 94–5; Späth, 'Architectural representation', S. 260–1, with further reading.
 - 26 R. Krautheimer, 'Introduction to an 'Iconography of Architecture'', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942), 1–33.
 - 27 Binski, *Becket's Crown*, p. 110; P. Williamson, *Gothic Sculpture, 1140–1300* (New Haven and London, 1995), pp. 107–11, calls these facades "image-screens"; Heslop, 'Conventual seals', p. 98.
 - 28 Binski, *Becket's Crown*, pp. 103–21, with a discussion of seals at pp. 109–11.
 - 29 It is attached to the charter of Prior John of Sittingbourne and the chapter to Blanche of Castile, widow of King Louis VIII of France, granting *officii* to his memory; see Paris, Archives nationales: J 461 no 9 (fig. 4). I am very much indebted to Nicholas Vincent for drawing my attention to this impression and its diplomatic context.
 - 30 Harvey and McGuinness, *A Guide*, pp. 11–13; Späth, 'Mikroarchitektur', pp. 259–62, with references to further reading.
 - 31 Winchester, Hampshire Record Office: 153M88/1; Heslop, 'Conventual seals', p. 96; Späth, 'Siegelbilder', 56 with fig. 12; idem, 'Mikroarchitektur', pp. 261–2.
 - 32 Cheney, 'Magna carta', 11–6.
 - 33 For instance the impression attached to WAM: 1642 of 1371 and London, BL: Cotton Ch. xxi.11 of 1418; on the placement of inscriptions on a seal's rim see Späth, 'Siegelbilder', 57–8. I am very much indebted to Dennis Pausch for his thoughtful philological advice on this inscription.
 - 34 + *EST HVIC VITA [A]MORI PRO QVA DVM VIXIT // AMORI MORS ERAT ET MEMORIE PER MORTEM VIVIT*; for an overall survey on metric seal legends in medieval Latin Europe see most recently T. Diederich, *Siegelkunde. Beiträge zu ihrer Vertiefung und Weiterführung* (Cologne, 2012), pp. 146–77 at pp. 167–70 for English seals.
 - 35 Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego*, pp. 140–50.
 - 36 London, BM, Seal-Die no. 831; cataloged by A. B. Tonnochy, *Catalogue of Seal-Dies in the British Museum* (London, 1952), no. 832; Birch, *Catalogue I*, no. 2688.
 - 37 Birch, *Catalogue I*, no. 3109.
 - 38 Birch, *Catalogue I*, no. 1523; Pedrick, *Monastic seals*, nos 5–6; the best preserved legend among the surviving impressions is to be found at Westminster Abbey, WAM 7933 (1410 August 13 here figs 6–8). I am very much indebted to Wytse Keulen for his thoughtful philological advice on this inscription.
 - 39 M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record. England 1066–1307*, 2nd edn (London, 1993), pp. 314–5, has already considered the function of seals as tools capable of bearing secrets; his discussion in this respect is however limited primarily to private seals, and in particular to those of women from the thirteenth century.
 - 40 On the medieval history of Ely in general see the various essays in *A History of Ely Cathedral*, eds P. Meadows and N. Ramsay (Woodbridge, 2003).
 - 41 For the extraordinarily rich documentary tradition regarding Ely's pre-1109 history see S. Keynes, 'Ely abbey 672–1109' in *History of Ely*, eds Meadows and Ramsay, pp. 3–58 here at pp. 3–10; on the visual culture see Binski, *Becket's Crown*, chap. 4 at pp. 81–101.

- 42 The surviving account rolls of Ely sacrist's from the fourteenth century onwards regularly include expenses for a goldsmith, and one evidently working on the premises: Ralf of Walsham's comptus (1302–3) includes an account of silver for the making of the new bishop's seal matrix, see F. R. Chapman, *Sacrist rolls of Ely, vol 2: Transcriptions* (Cambridge, 1907), p. 18; in Alan de Walsingham's account (1335–6) payments for the rebuilding of a goldsmith's workshop are recorded, see, p. 57.
- 43 Binski, *Becket's Crown*, pp. 84–7.
- 44 The work is thoughtfully edited by E. O. Blake, *Liber Eliensis* (London, 1962), and has recently been translated by J. Fairweather, *Liber Eliensis. A history of the Isle of Ely from the seventh century to the twelfth. Compiled by a Monk of Ely in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge, 2005). A good overview of the work's background is provided by Keynes, 'Ely Abbey', pp. 8–9.
- 45 From the hagiographical perspective see Binski, *Becket's Crown*, pp. 84–5, and Keynes, 'Ely Abbey', pp. 10–4.
- 46 On the historical context see Keynes, 'Ely Abbey', pp. 18–27. This dedication is recorded in a document inserted into the chronicle, and purporting to be king Edgar's foundation charter, see Blake (ed.), *Liber Eliensis*, II, 5, p. 77: *monasterium, quod in regione Ely situm dinoscitur, antiquitus sancti Petri apostolorum principis honore dedicatum*.
- 47 Past research has repeatedly identified the latter person as St Etheldreda, see Pedrick, *Monastic seals*, p. 70; also P. Date, 'Houses of Benedictine monks: Abbey and cathedral priory of Ely', in P. Salzman (ed) *VCH Cambridgeshire*, vol. 2, p. 204. This identification is however incorrect as, according to thirteenth century iconographical conventions, the image clearly shows a male, royal figure.
- 48 Blake (ed.), *Liber Eliensis*, II, 53, p. 122: *Ita per viginti miliaria terrestri via progressi, ad fluvium in Brandune devenere ingressique cum illo vitali ferculo*.
- 49 It is suggested that the transformation of the abbey into a cathedral priory in 1109, however, did not become a subject of the monks' seal imagery because, as they lost much of their former wealth in the process, it may have been viewed as an event unsuitable for commemoration in this way. See E. Miller, *The abbey and bishopric of Ely. The social history of an ecclesiastical estate from the tenth century to the early fourteenth century* (Cambridge, 1951).
- 50 N. Coldstream, *The Decorated Style. Architecture and Ornament, 1240 – 1360* (London, 1994), pp. 35–9.
- 51 Späth, 'Siegelbilder', 66.
- 52 P. Draper, 'Bishop Northwold and the Cult of Saint Etheldreda', idem and N. Coldstream (eds), *Medieval Art and Architecture at Ely Cathedral* (London, 1979), pp. 8–27.
- 53 Coldstream, *Decorated Style*, p. 48.
- 54 This seal can be dated slightly later, to around 1300, see Birch, *Catalogue I*, no. 3109; Ellis, *Catalogue*, no. M 671 ; Pedrick, *Monastic seals*, no. 39.

Putting seals on the map: Francis Blomefield's *Plan of the City of Norwich* (1746) and the constitution of civic history¹

T. A. Heslop and Matthew Sillence

Introduction

This paper examines Francis Blomefield's engraved *Plan of the City of Norwich* produced for his *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*.² Although Blomefield's contribution to our understanding of the history of Norfolk has been the subject of many studies, the illustrations that accompanied his texts have received comparatively little attention. The first part of this paper aims to explore some of the traditions of representing the city and county that informed the *Plan* and posits that it was unique in its author's incorporation of a remarkable variety of seals covering a wide time span. The second part presents an analysis of the seals that draws on our historical knowledge of the city, as well as the extensive antiquarian cast collections of seals held in Norwich. It is argued that the decision to include such a large number of seals on the *Plan* was based on a desire to represent not only local authority (which could also be achieved through the city arms or civic regalia) but the machinery and traditions of governance, and the charitable acts, functions and connections of individuals and institutions. Each seal signified its owner, whose actions in the past contributed to Blomefield's view of

the city's rich social fabric. The use of seals rather than other images or texts to make such a statement may have been a deliberate play on the function of the seal as a device of authentication; thus conferring a sense of validity on Blomefield's topography and giving veracity to his history.

Cartographic traditions in Norfolk

Francis Blomefield's *Plan of the City of Norwich* (590 × 667 mm; Fig. 13.1) came from a tradition, well-established from the sixteenth century, of rendering the urban fabric of cities and their immediate environs.³ From the seventeenth century, copper plate engraving facilitated the production of very detailed views of England's cities. These sometimes included representations of major buildings found in those cities; an example is James Corbridge's plan of Norwich (1727), which is surrounded by compartments framing architectural views.⁴ A different trajectory had been started four years earlier by Thomas Kirkpatrick (brother of the antiquary John Kirkpatrick), who produced a prospect view of the city from the north-east. It shows the cathedral, castle and the Shirehouse. It was



Fig. 13.1. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving, 590 × 667 mm, 1746, NWHCM : 1954.138.Todd5. *Norwich*.6. © Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service (Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery).

printed in 1723 on two sheets, and has an upper and lower section.⁵ The lower contains three sub-sections: on the left are coins minted in Norwich; at the right is a plan view of the city inset; and in the centre is an explanation of the prospect and the plan.⁶ The depiction of coins also featured on Hermann Moll's map of Norfolk (1724). The association of antiquities with the city or the county made a very different statement about that location.

Cartographers of this period chose to include not just the built environment (i.e. the historic environment that one could still see) but *unseen*, portable (and very possibly recent) finds that were related to earlier societies that occupied that same geographical space. This trend was not limited to coinage.

In 1725, a plan of the town of King's Lynn (Fig. 13.2) was engraved by William Rastrick, a preacher who became a minister to the



town's Presbyterian congregation.⁷ Although Rastrick's plan incorporates several familiar elements, such as the lists of important institutions and illustrations of important and imposing buildings, it introduces two novel features: the common seal and civic regalia. The Lynn common seal still survives. It is a two-part matrix in high-quality copper alloy with one part showing St Margaret with a dragon at her feet with the legend SUB MARGARETA TERITUR DRACO STAT CRUCE LETA (Happy Margaret stands, the Dragon is ground under the Cross) (Fig. 13.4). The choice of saint relates to the town's church of St Margaret, founded in 1101 by Bishop Herbert de Losinga, which was under the jurisdiction of the bishop until 1537.⁸ The other matrix (Fig. 13.3) shows the eagle of St John the Evangelist carrying a scroll and the words IN PRINCIPIO ERAT VERBUM (in the beginning was the word).⁹

The legend of this part of the matrix reads SIGILLUM COMMUNITATIS LENNIE.¹⁰ The inhabitants of King's Lynn had a very strong relationship with the common seal. For example, the local Grammar School recorded the use of the seal in congregation ceremonies in the seventeenth century; a tradition that continued for many decades.¹¹

The second significant feature is the inclusion of the mayoral regalia in the form of the mace, sword and the so-called 'King John's Cup', which played an important part in the visualisation of civic authority.¹² The imaging of these together with the common seal was, in effect, a form of ceremonial display. Rastrick's map of Lynn seems to be the earliest precursor of the Blomefield plan of Norwich because of the two features that have been discussed. Whereas Lynn was represented by an object that had been in use for some 500 years, and continued to be used locally, the

Fig. 13.2. William Rastrick, *Ichnographia burgi perantiqui Lennæ regis in agro Norfolkienſi accurate delineata*, engraving (1725), reprinted in Vol. IV of F. Blomefield, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: containing a description of the towns villages and hamlets* (Fersfield, 1739–75) Special Collections (OS) DA 637. University of East Anglia Library and Archives.

Fig. 13.3. Obverse of the common seal of King's Lynn (c. 1300), red shellac impression, 73 × 73 mm, NMAS Seal Collection: L Norfolk 5.3 © Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service (Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery).



Fig. 13.4. Reverse of the common seal of King's Lynn (c. 1300), red shellac impression, 73 × 73 mm, NMAS Seal Collection: L Norfolk 6 © Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service (Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery).



seals on Blomefield's plan span some 600 years and form a web of much more complex associations.

The production of Blomefield's *Plan*

The production of Francis Blomefield's *An Essay towards Topographical History of Norfolk* began in 1732 when the author was in contact with Thomas Martin (1697–1771), who provided access to literature on Norfolk's history. Initially intended as a two-volume work released in monthly parts to subscribers, it eventually became a much larger project that did not begin until 1736. Blomefield's second volume, which was assembled from 1739, concentrated on Norwich as a result of competitive interest from Benjamin Mackerell who intended to produce a rival volume on the city.¹³

David Stoker's work on the correspondence of Blomefield has shown that each engraving



Fig. 13.5. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail showing dedication to Thomas Gooch, Bishop of Norwich).



Fig. 13.6. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of seal 140).

was paid for by a subscriber, typically one with a personal interest in particular buildings, arms, monuments or seals.¹⁴ The *Plan of Norwich* was paid for by Thomas Gooch, Bishop of Norwich (1675–1754), who is mentioned in the cartouche on the *Plan* (Fig. 13.5). Gooch transferred to Norwich in November 1738 after being consecrated as Bishop of Bristol in the previous year.¹⁵ During his time at Norwich he incorporated the societies for the government of the charity for the relief of the widows and children of the poor clergy in the Diocese of Norwich.¹⁶ The most recent seal illustrated on the plan is dated 1741 and belonged to this charitable organisation (Fig. 13.6). This

seal also provides a useful *terminus post quem* for the plan itself.¹⁷ Although Gooch did not have long-standing connections with Norwich, his interest in the city and county's social institutions may have set the framework for the inclusion of certain seals and the exclusion of others. Most conspicuous by its absence is the seal of Norwich cathedral priory. This was illustrated in volume 2, but was paid for by Thomas Martin and engraved by Blomefield's copper-plate engraver at Fersfield, William Toms.¹⁸

Blomefield evidently had access to a large number of earlier plans to inform his own, citing access to antiquarian John Kirkpatrick's papers. It was Kirkpatrick's brother, Thomas, who had authored the 1723 prospect of Norwich incorporating coins from the city. Cartographic historian Thomas Chubb wrote about the making of the Blomefield plan, claiming that:

'Although the plan definitely describes Blomefield as "delin. et excud.", he may not have done more than prepare a rough outline, because he appears not to have been an accomplished artist. From copies of his letters in his Original Entry Book of Memoranda for the History of Norfolk, 1733–6, (presented to the Norwich Public Libraries by Mr Walter Rye) it appears that he had "great difficulty in finding friends to draw" for him. He also acknowledges help received from "one Mr. Martin, as good a drawer as any is in England."' ¹⁹

Stoker's biography of Thomas Martin may support Chubb's suggestion that Blomefield had help producing the plan, as Martin was apparently known in antiquarian circles for his skill as a copyist in 'the different writing of every aera, and tricking arms, seals, &c, with great neatness'.²⁰ However, Walter Rye's representation of Blomefield's character and abilities in an earlier entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* has been criticised by Stoker.²¹ Collaboration on the drawings for the plan is certainly possible, and may have been necessary given its size and the number of seals that were included.

Blomefield and Toms appear to have had a difficult professional relationship, with the latter falling out of favour in 1736, but he was still employed by Blomefield until 1743.²² Subsequently, writing to a William Cole at Kings College, Cambridge on 10 March 1746, Blomefield stated that 'My map is now near finished. Mr Vertue hath the 2d revise.'²³ George Vertue (1684–1756) was well-known



Fig. 13.7. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of the seals 171–3).

and highly respected as engraver to the Society of Antiquaries and Oxford University, but there is no direct correspondence between him and Blomefield to illuminate the working process.²⁴ Stoker does not elaborate on the decision to use Vertue as the engraver for the *Plan*.

An analysis of the seals on the plan

No matter who was finally responsible for the generally very good engravings of the seals, there are clear grounds for supposing that the choice of material and its organisation on the

Fig. 13.8. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of seal 171).

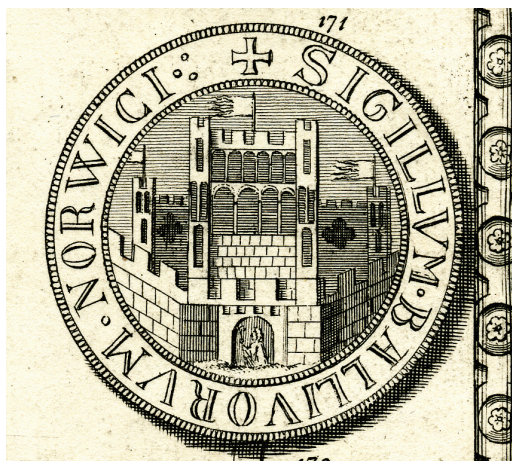


Fig. 13.9. London common seal (1219), sulphur cast, (72 × 72 mm), NMAS Seal Collection © Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service (Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery).



Fig. 13.10. Obverse of the bailiff's seal of Norwich (c. 1223–26), red wax impression, 56 × 56 mm, Norfolk Record Office: COL/5/1. © Norfolk Record Office.



map were largely Blomefield's responsibility. So, for example, on the right hand side is a series of seals relating to the city's governance, shown as a sequence with a single vertical axis (Fig. 13.7). The uppermost is the earliest,

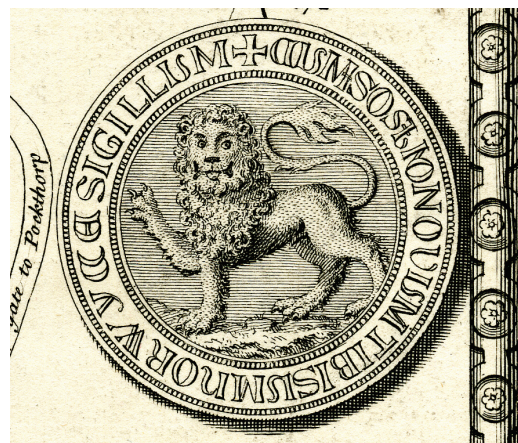


Fig. 13.11. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of seal 172).

made for the bailiffs of Norwich (Fig. 13.8). The matrix probably dates from between 1223 and 1226 and was almost certainly engraved by Walter de Ripa, a London goldsmith who made the great seal for Henry III in 1218 and the seal for the 'barons' of London, possibly in the following year.²⁵ The latter (Fig. 13.9) shows a remarkable cityscape including two fortified towers, no doubt meant as the White Tower and Baynard's Castle. The differences between their characterisation and the keep on the Norwich seal is instructive, as it shows two registers of external arcading, the upper with more numerous and smaller arches than the lower (Fig. 13.10). It seems that the seal engraver had been given a summary description of the most distinctive feature of Norwich castle.²⁶

On the *Plan* below the bailiff's seal is a reverse made for it at a later date (Fig. 13.11), which Blomefield suggests was sometimes used separately. He attributes the engraving of the matrix to the reign of Edward III, but the style of the lettering and the walking lion is significantly earlier, perhaps the third quarter of the thirteenth century (Fig. 13.12).²⁷ The choice of motif clearly alludes to the royal arms and perhaps implies the king's authority. It may be that it was made as a sign of necessary reform in the aftermath of the riots of 1272, which brought the citizens of Norwich and their governance unfavourably to Henry III's attention.²⁸ The legend certainly suggests a desire for renewal: CUM SC...O NOVUM TIBI SUM NORWYCE SIGILLUM (with ..., Norwich, I am your new seal). Unfortunately



Fig. 13.12. Reverse of the bailiff's seal of Norwich (c. 1275?) gutta percha cast, 56 × 56 mm.



Fig. 13.15. Statute Merchant counterseal (c. 1298), gutta percha impression, 24 × 24 mm, NMAS Seal Collection: Colman 173. © Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service (Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery).



Fig. 13.13. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of the seal 173).



Fig. 13.14. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of the seal 170a).

the second word is unclear, but the imperious tone is unmistakable.

The other thirteenth-century seal made for the city and included on the *Plan* is the Statute Merchant seal and its small counterseal (Figs 13.13 and 13.14). An extensive memorandum



Fig. 13.16. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of the seals 174–6).

Fig. 13.17. *Norwich City Seal reverse* (c. 1404), red wax impression, 59 × 59 mm, Norfolk Record Office: COL/5/4. © Norfolk Record Office.



Fig. 13.18. *Norwich City Seal reverse* (post-1573), gutta percha impression, 59 × 59 mm, NMA Seal Collection: Colman 170. © Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service (Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery).



Fig. 13.19. *Seal of the Mayoralty of Norwich* (c. 1404), gutta percha impression, 49 × 49 mm, NMA Seal Collection: Colman 171. © Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service (Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery).



on the dorse of the Treasurer's Remembrancer's Roll for 1298 records the circumstances of its manufacture and delivery.²⁹ The purpose of these seals was to ensure the security of debts and they were first made in 1283 for major cities. Apparently in 1295 Norwich petitioned to be included in their number and three years later the two matrices were ready for collection in London and were delivered to two citizens of Norwich, the larger seal to William But, one of the city's four bailiffs in the late 1280s and early '90s, and the small 'clerk's' seal to John de Kirkby. The design of the obverse was standard, but the counterseals were sometimes specific to their cities; London's had a half-length image of St Paul, and Oxford's an ox.³⁰ The engraving on Blomefield's plan does not well depict what was provided for Norwich: a half-length figure of Christ rising from within a walled enclosure (Fig. 13.14). This was intended to represent the Resurrection and followed in broad terms the seal made for Norwich Cathedral chapter in the second quarter of the twelfth century.³¹ It is one of a number of indicators that the Resurrection was a major devotional focus in the city, one which persisted into the sixteenth century (see below). From the misrepresentation of the subject matter on Blomefield's *Plan* it seems certain all that was available was a weak impression rather than the original matrix or a cast from it (Fig. 13.15). Indeed, the loose impression now in the British Library was almost certainly the source. This impression is one of a large collection made apparently by Peter Le Neve, whose handwriting appears on several of the parchment tags.³² This body of material seems to have passed to Thomas Martin, which would explain how Blomefield knew it. These loose seals provided the basis for about half the other seals engraved on the *Plan*. When it came to the obverse of the Statute Merchant seal, however, Blomefield apparently had direct recourse to the matrix, which he describes as 'exceedingly fine' and as being kept in the Norwich Guildhall.³³ It was apparently still extant in 1895 when Jewitt and Hope wrote the account of the Norwich civic regalia and described it as 'of silver' while commenting that the small counterseal was 'now lost'.³⁴ What has become of it in the interim is an unresolved question.

In 1404 Norwich became a corporation with a mayor, and according to Blomefield the two earlier, thirteenth-century matrices were broken

and sent to London so that their metal could be reused by a goldsmith called Henry Couper to make a new two-sided 'common' seal (Fig. 13.16). He also made a seal for the mayor, the three matrices costing £4 13s in total.³⁵ The imagery of two of them as first made is notably religious for civic seals of the period, referencing the dedication of the cathedral to the Trinity, however both were subsequently altered during the Reformation. Blomefield chose to depict the city seal in its original form, necessarily taking the information from a wax impression (Fig. 13.17). The reworked matrix of the city seal survives and is currently on display at the Castle Museum in Norwich in its altered form, with the substitution of IMMANUEL in place of the Trinity (Fig. 13.18). This is dated on the matrix to 1573, a date confirmed by a record to amend the seal in the minutes of a Council meeting in the previous year.³⁶ The mayor's seal matrix does not seem to be extant, however, and its original form is only known now from impressions or casts (Fig. 13.19). Its imagery was identical to the Trinity side of the original state of the city seal. Perhaps for that reason and perhaps also because the original design was known to him only in a single worn impression, Blomefield chose to have its post-Reformation form engraved (Fig. 13.20), apparently believing it to be a fifteenth-century mayoral seal 'ad causas'.³⁷ The reworked matrix substituted the resurrected Christ for the image of the Trinity, a task that appears from the city records to have been undertaken in 1568. However, there is some uncertainty because the figure of Christ was not what was originally decided:

'This daye Mr Mayor moved this hows for thalteracion of the Seall of offyce of mayoralie Wherupon this hows considering that the Seall of the same office wch now is hath the picture of the Trynytee wch is not only contrary to godds word but allso contrary to the Quenis maiesties iniunctions have and doo agree that the same Seall of the Trynytee shalbe altered and shalbe from henceforth with the Armes of this cittie'.³⁸

Quite how and when this decision was overturned is not currently clear, but it may well be significant that the mayor in 1568 was Thomas Parker, whose brother Matthew was archbishop of Canterbury and whose own seal is also on the *Plan*.³⁹

It seems likely that the logical sequence of seals on the right hand side of the *Plan*

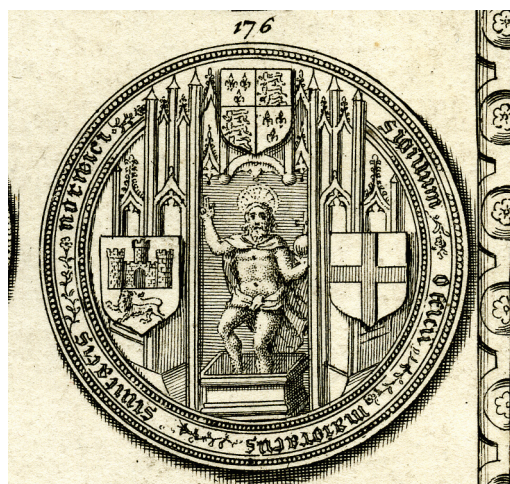


Fig. 13.20. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of the seal 176).



Fig. 13.21. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of the seal 177).

Fig. 13.22. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of the seals 181–3).

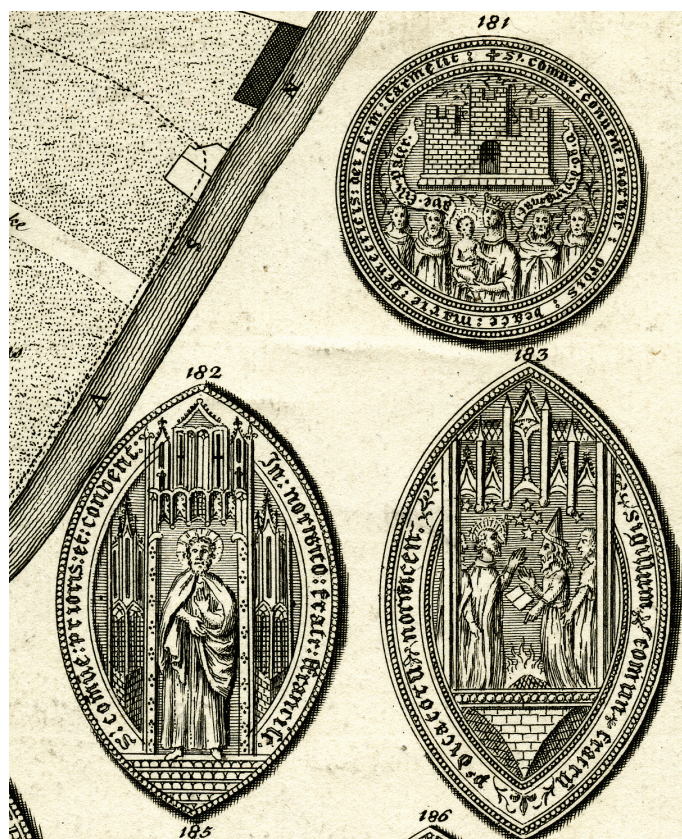




Fig. 13.23. Seal of Dominicans of Norwich (1300–1400), sulphur cast, 60 × 39 mm, NMAS Seal Collection: Neville-Rolfe G78. © Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service (Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery).



Fig. 13.24. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of seals 184 and 185).



Fig. 13.28. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of 148).

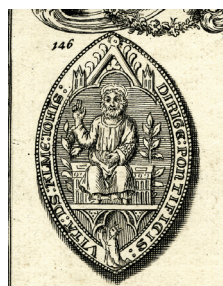


Fig. 13.26. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of seal 146).



Fig. 13.25. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of seal 188).



Fig. 13.27. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of seal 154).



Fig. 13.29. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of 147).



Fig. 13.30. Francis Blomefield, *A Plan of the City of Norwich*, engraving (detail of 162).

was carefully considered by Blomefield, for the next example also shows his guiding expertise. This is the personal seal of Sir John Clifton of Buckenham (Fig. 13.21), who was appointed as governor of the Norwich during the forfeiture of its liberties between 1443 and 1447 following Gladman's Revolt, when the validity of the seals made by Couper was suspended. By including Clifton's seal in this context, Blomefield was able knowingly to refer to an episode in the city's history and to the career of a notable local benefactor and 'peacemaker' who, *inter alia*, helped the priory of Wymondham gain independent abbey status and contributed to building its new nave clerestory and roof and founded its great west tower.⁴⁰

The orderly arrangement of these seals and the principles underlying it give an indication of the motives for their inclusion which, to a degree, apply elsewhere on the *Plan*. Immediately to the left of the two-sided common seal are grouped those of three of the Norwich friaries, the Carmelites, Franciscans and Dominicans, also apparently from a similar period (Fig. 13.22).⁴¹ Blomefield's interest in these places as part of the social fabric of the city, receiving donations and accommodating burials, shows the historian in him at work, transcending his own Anglicanism to recuperate pre-Reformation institutional organisation. As Blomefield recognised, since he analyses it in detail, the most remarkable of the seals shows a miracle of St Dominic in which a book refuting heresies is dropped into a fire by the heretics he is seeking to convert and is retrieved, or indeed 'jumps out' undamaged (Fig. 13.23). Although he does not comment on the reason for this choice of subject, it is hard not to associate it with the burning of the Dominican church in Norwich in 1413, a time of increasing anxiety about the Lollard 'heresies', and the subsequent rebuilding of the church using elements that were saved undamaged from the flames, but with major new elements paid for by the Cliftons, among others.⁴² The fact that from 1401 being burned alive was the punishment for relapsed heretics would have added a further dimension to this story.

The inclusion nearby of the seals of Bishop Walter Suffield (Fig. 13.24) and the Hospital of St Giles (Fig. 13.25), of which he was the founder, indicate Blomefield's interest in medieval charitable foundations, but in this

case one that survived the Reformation and indeed is still functioning today, and known after its refoundation in 1547 as the Great Hospital.⁴³ A similar motive probably explains the choice of the (counter)seal of Bishop John Salmon (Fig. 13.26) who founded the College of St John the Evangelist, now largely famous for the survival of its so-called Carnary Chapel, which today is part of Norwich School. The College had an educational function at least by the early fifteenth century but also developed legal and gild functions, thereby tying the cathedral more closely to the life of the city.

The largest seal on the *Plan* (Fig. 13.27) can be fitted into this picture of charitable donations and continuity across the Reformation. It belonged to Matthew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury from 1559–1575, who was born and raised in Norwich and shows an ambitiously detailed image of the Last Judgement, with Christ enthroned as the dominant figure.⁴⁴ It is placed near the image of the silver-gilt ewer donated by Parker to the city. In addition, the archbishop created six annual scholarships at Cambridge for young men from the city and was instrumental in removing some of the heat from arguments between conservatives and reformers in the cathedral chapter.⁴⁵ If that were not enough to recommend him to Blomefield, Parker's formative role in the Elizabethan settlement, linking the English Church of his day to its early Anglo-Saxon 'origins' would probably have clinched it. Displaying Parker's seals (the signet is there too) adjacent to the charities set up by Thomas Gooch to support the widows and orphans of clergymen was perhaps a piece of flattery but possibly also exhortation to him to go further in emulating one of the city's most famous sons.

However, Parker's seal is not the only reference to Canterbury, for also depicted is the *sigillum commissarii prioris cantuarie* explained by Blomefield as used by the 'Guardian to the See during its vacancies' (Fig. 13.28). It is placed immediately below what is, in many respects, the most surprising inclusion: the seal of Anthony Bek, bishop of Norwich from 1337–43 (Fig. 13.29). Bek, a papal appointee to the See, had a poor reputation, and Blomefield repeats the story that he died as a result of being poisoned by one of the monks.⁴⁶ He made, however, one notable move, contesting the archbishop of Canterbury's right of visitation of the monastery and diocese of Norwich.

As a result, Archbishop Stratford placed Bek and his diocese under Inderdict, but too late as Bek had already appealed to the Pope. As a result Stratford found himself on the back foot and the case was not resolved as he would have wanted. Though it is unlikely that Gooch, Master of Caius College, Cambridge and successively bishop of Bristol, Norwich and Ely needed any lessons in politics from Blomefield, the purpose of including this minor victory was perhaps to show a necessary balance between local and national authority, and to remind future bishops of Norwich that the metropolitan's involvement in the diocese could be beneficial but also a threat.⁴⁷

Easier to understand than Bek's presence is the twelfth-century conventual seal of St Benet's Abbey at Holm (Fig. 13.30). Founded as a Benedictine monastery in 1019 during King Cnut's reign, it had been transferred to the bishopric by Henry VIII, making the bishop titular abbot. Along with certain furnishings and fittings, this brought ownership of the Abbey's swans, and the captions to the recorded swan marks on Blomefield's *Plan* make this point specifically, adding 'now the Bishop's' to those formerly belonging to the Abbey and its cellarer. There is much more that could be said about the ways in which the seals on the map function as micro-narratives of continuity in the history of the city and its cathedral, and of its author's motives. But we hope that it is already clear that the seals on Blomefield's *Plan* are far from a random collection, or just what happened to be available. They are a partial selection, in both senses of the word, designed to combine a tone of historically based moral direction with a necessary nod to authority. There are many details still to be established, such as how images of the seals and their appropriate positions were conveyed to the engraver, and how far it is demonstrable that Blomefield himself knew the information that we are suggesting underpinned his selection. But whatever the outcome of further work through the survey of Norwich seals, we are already in a position to marvel at the ambition and flair demonstrated by Francis Blomefield in putting these seals on his map. As so often the case too, several of these engravings remain to this day the only published images of the seals' appearance. Indeed in a few cases where the matrix is lost and no impressions or casts are known, Blomefield's *Plan* provides the only

evidence that such a seal once existed. For this reason too, the work of Blomefield and that other antiquaries of the early modern period will always be a fundamental aspect of the study of seals.

Notes

- 1 The authors are grateful to Dr Fiona Sheales for drawing attention to the plan, Dr Tim Pestell, Steven Ashley, Dr Adrian Marsden, Dr Giorgia Bottinelli and Paris Agar of Norfolk Museums and Archaeology service for allowing access to the Blomefield plan and extensive cast collections in Norwich Castle Museum. We would like to thank Susan Maddock of Norfolk Record Office for her advice on the collections in Norwich and King's Lynn, and Bridget Gillies of the University of East Anglia Special Collections for access to their copy of Blomefield's text. Our thanks also go to Professor Paul Harvey for signalling previous work on cartographic history.
- 2 F. Blomefield and C. Parkin, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Containing a Description of the Towns, Villages, and Hamlets*, 5 vols (Fersfield, 1739–1775).
- 3 Norwich's earliest surviving printed map is dated to 1558, and it also happens to be the earliest surviving map of any English town, J. Elliot, *The City in Maps: Urban Mapping to 1900* (London, 1987), p. 39 and R. Frostick, *The Printed Plans of Norwich, 1558–1840: A Casto-Bibliography* (Norwich, 2002, pp. 1–4. Engraved by John Bettes for William Cunningham, and published in the latter's 1559 *The Cosmographical Glasse*, this woodcut features many of the key buildings in the city at the time. This can be consulted in Cambridge University Library Maps.bb.77.55.1. Further representations of the city were created by Georg Hoefnagle in 1577, who included a list of 21 places and buildings of note in the city. This time it was a view across the city from an imagined vantage point. At the top left are the royal arms, and at the top right the arms of the city of Norwich itself. Along the bottom border, in the centre is a man and a woman. Georg Hoefnagle was a Flemish painter and engraver who produced this view of Norwich for his *Civitates orbis terrarum* (1577). T. Chubb, *A Descriptive List of the Printed Maps of Norfolk, 1574–1916*, ed. G. A. Stephen (Norwich, 1928), pp. 195–6. See also L. Hendrix, 'Hoefnagle, Joris', *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*. <<http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T038428>>, accessed 17 March 2012 2012.
- 4 Elliot, *The City in Maps: Urban Mapping to 1900*, pp. 47–9.

- 5 Chubb, *A Descriptive List of the Printed Maps of Norfolk, 1574–1916*, pp. 204–6 and Frostick, *Printed Plans*, pp. 29–33.
- 6 *Ibid.* pp. 37–8. Kirkpatrick's inclusion of a series of coins from Norwich was clearly influential as the cartographer, Hermann Moll, produced a plan of the county of Norfolk for his book *A New Description of England and Wales* (1724). They are described here as 'Saxon coins'. For further information on Moll's coins, see P. D. A. Harvey and Y. Harvey, 'The Coins on Hermann Moll's Maps of the Counties of England and Wales', in *Accurata Descriptio: studier i kartografi, numismatik, orientalisk och biblioteksväsen tillägnade Ulla Ehrensvärd*, eds G. Bäärnhielm and U. Ehrensvärd, Acta Bibliothecae Regiae Stockholmiensis (Stockholm, 2003), pp. 169–200 at p. 169, who note that the depiction of coins on county maps was not common in the early eighteenth century.
- 7 J. A. Oddy, 'Rastrick, William (bap. 1697, d. 1752)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23154>>, accessed 8 February 2012 2012.
- 8 F. Blomefield, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: containing a description of the towns, villages, and hamlets, with the foundations of monasteries, churches, chapels, chantries, and other religious buildings*, ed. C. Parkin, 11 vols, 2nd edn (London, 1805–10), vol. II, p. 50.
- 9 This design has certain parallels with the two-sided matrix of Inchaffray Abbey from Perthshire, Scotland. See V. Glenn, 'Thirteenth-century seals – Tayside, Fife and the wider world', *Tayside and Fife Archaeological Journal* 5 (1999), 146–62.
- 10 W. De Gray Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 6 vols (London, 1887–1900) vol. II, cat. no. 5149, p. 127. Rastrick 'modernises' the legend as '*sigillum communitatis lenne regis*' in reference to the new constitution of the borough, granted by Henry VIII and preserved in King's Lynn Record Office (KL/C 2/46) of 27 June 1524. This is not justified by any change actually made to the matrix itself.
- 11 The authors are grateful to Michael Walker for information on the Corporation Hall Books and Committee Reports of Lynn Grammar School, Kings Lynn Borough Archives.
- 12 Still the most useful texts on such objects are L. F. W. Jewitt and W. H. St John Hope, *The Corporation Plate and Insignia of Office of the Cities and Towns of England and Wales*, 2 vols (London, 1895).
- 13 D. Stoker, 'Blomefield, Francis (1705–1752)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2663>>, accessed 17 March 2012 2012.
- 14 F. Blomefield, *The Correspondence of the Reverend Francis Blomefield (1705–52)*, ed. D. Stoker (London, 1992), p. 39.
- 15 C. Haydon, 'Gooch, Sir Thomas, second baronet (1675–1754)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10941>>, accessed 18 March 2012 2012.
- 16 P. Browne, *The History of Norwich: from the earliest records to the present time* (Norwich, 1814), p. 279.
- 17 This is seal no. 140: 'The Seal of the Corporation for the Norfolk Clergymen's Widows and Orphans'. The legend reads: '* SIGILL. GUBERNATORVM : CHARITATIS : IN SUPPET : VIDUAR : & LIB : CLER : NORVIC & NORF : '.
- 18 This seal is in F. Blomefield and C. Parkin, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, vol. II, at p. 534, and is dedicated to Thomas Martin.
- 19 Chubb, *A Descriptive List of the Printed Maps of Norfolk, 1574–1916*, p. 211.
- 20 D. Stoker, 'Martin, Thomas (1697–1771)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18212>>, accessed 17 March 2012 2012, citing the preface to T. Martin and R. Gough, *The History of the Town of Thetford* (London, 1779), p. ix.
- 21 Stoker, 'Blomefield, Francis (1705–1752)'.
- 22 Blomefield, *The Correspondence of the Reverend Francis Blomefield (1705–52)*, pp. 41–2.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 242 (letter no. 275) and Frostick, *Printed Plans*, pp. 44–7.
- 24 M. Myrone, 'Vertue, George (1684–1756)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28252>>, accessed 18 March 2012 2012. Vertue was evidently interested in seals in the last decade of his career, for in 1753 he published an entire volume on the medals, coins and great-seals that had been produced under the reign of Charles I and the Commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell: G. Vertue, *Medals, coins, great-seals, impressions, from the elaborate works of Thomas Simon: chief Engraver of the Mint. to K. Charles the Ist to the Common Wealth, the Lord Protector Cromwell and in the Reign of K. Charles ye Ist to MDCLXV* (London, 1753).
- 25 An impression in the British Library is said to have been cut from a charter of 1226. De Gray Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* vol. II, cat. no. 5234, p. 143. For Walter's oeuvre, J. Alexander and P. Binski (eds), *The Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400* (London, 1987), cat. no. 453, p. 397 and for the London seal cat. no. 193, p. 273.
- 26 For the design of Norwich keep, T. A. Heslop, *Norwich Castle Keep: Romanesque Architecture and Social Context* (Norwich, 1994).

- 27 Blomefield and Parkin, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Containing a Description of the Towns, Villages, and Hamlets* vol. II, p. xx. The only known extant impression is on a loose seal in the British Library where it is on the reverse of the Bailiff's seal.
- 28 C. Rawcliffe and R. G. Wilson (eds), *Medieval Norwich* (London, 2004), p. 34.
- 29 C. S. Perceval, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries* IX (2nd Ser) (June 1883), pp. 253–61 at p. 261.
- 30 *Ibid.* and also C. S. Perceval, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, VII (2nd Ser) (December 1878), pp. 107–19.
- 31 T. A. Heslop, 'The Medieval Conventual Seals', in *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City and Diocese 1096–1996*, ed. I. Atherton (London, 1996), pp. 443–50.
- 32 The attribution of the writing to Le Neve is made in the *Catalogue of Loose Seals*, a handwritten volume on open shelf in the British Library manuscript room. The relevant section was compiled in the late 1830s.
- 33 Blomefield and Parkin, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Containing a Description of the Towns, Villages, and Hamlets*, vol. III, p. 95.
- 34 Jewitt and Hope, *The Corporation Plate and Insignia of Office of the Cities and Towns of England and Wales*, vol. II, p. 186.
- 35 The city accounts for the years 1404 and 1405 are now missing so these details cannot be checked. Blomefield presumably had access to them or at least to extracts.
- 36 'This daye by the concente of this howse for diverse good causes yt is agreyd that the comon seale of the Citty shalbe ateryd on that syd that the pycture of the 'Trinety ys graven.' Norfolk Record Office NCR Case 16d/3, fol. 203. The document is dated 21 September 1572. This reference is mentioned in George A. Stephen's notes for a text on Norwich civic regalia, Norfolk Record Office MS 11346.
- 37 Blomefield asserts that the mayor had two matrices made, but the one he describes as 'in use to this day' is a reworking of the 1404 matrix: it has the same legend identically disposed, and makes no reference to the 'ad causas' function he proposes. Blomefield and Parkin, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Containing a Description of the Towns, Villages, and Hamlets* vol. III, p. 895. This seal is also mentioned in G. Pedrick, *Borough Seals of the Gothic Period* (London, 1904), pl. xxxvi, no. 72.
- 38 Norfolk Record Office NCR Case 16a/8, fol. 61. The document is dated 26 June 1568. This reference is also mentioned in Stephen's notes, Norfolk Record Office MS 11346.
- 39 The architectural framework and arms are identical in both versions of the seal, although such is the damage to the legend on the cast that full comparison is impossible.
- 40 P. Cattermole, *Wymondham Abbey: A History of the Monastery and Parish Church* (Wymondham, 2007), pp. 98–9 and p. 258.
- 41 Two other friary seals appear: the Sack Friars (suppressed in 1307) and the Friars Minor (see below).
- 42 The date of the fire is recorded by Thomas Walsingham in his *Chronica Maiora*. T. Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham, II, 1394–1422*, eds J. Taylor, W. R. Childs, and L. Watkiss, Oxford Medieval Texts, 2 (Oxford, 2011), pp. 620–21. Blomefield perhaps knew the miracle from its inclusion in *The Golden Legend*. See J. De Voragine and W. Granger Ryan, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, 2 vols (Princeton, 1995), vol. II, p. 45.
- 43 See C. Rawcliffe, *Medicine for the Soul: Life, Death and Resurrection of an English Medieval Hospital, St Giles's, Norwich, c. 1249–1550* (Stroud, 1999).
- 44 K. Slocum Brainerd, 'Martir quod Stillat Primatis ab Ore Sigillat: Sealed with the Blood of Becket', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 165 (2012), 61–88 at pp. 81–4, fig. 29.
- 45 C. Rawcliffe and R. G. Wilson (eds), *Norwich Since 1550* (London, 2004), p. 60 and R. Houlbrooke, 'Refoundation and Reformation, 1538–1628', in *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City, and Diocese, 1096–1996*, ed. I. Atherton (London, 1996), pp. 507–39.
- 46 Blomefield and Parkin, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Containing a Description of the Towns, Villages, and Hamlets* vol. IV, p. 359.
- 47 C. N. L. Brooke, *A History of Gonville and Caius College* (Woodbridge, 1985), pp. 161–71. Bek's seal was also the first episcopal seal at Norwich to feature the arms of the bishop, a point made by Blomefield in the key to the plan. For the seals of the Bishops of Norwich, see T. G. Bayfield, 'A Descriptive Catalogue of the Seals of the Bishops of Norwich, from A.D. DCCCL to the Reformation', *Norfolk Archaeology* I (1847), pp. 305–23.

Appendix 13.1: List of all seals on the *Plan of the City of Norwich*

Abbreviations:

NCM – Norwich Castle Museum
Colman – Colman Cast Collection
E Norwich – Norwich Ecclesiastical Series
Neville-Rolfe – Neville-Rolfe Cast Collection
C Norfolk – Conventual Norfolk Series
L Norfolk – Local Norfolk Series

Blomefield – Blomefield, F. and Parkin, C., *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: Containing a Description of the Towns, Villages, and Hamlets*, 5 vols (Fersfield, 1739–1775) 2nd edn, 11 vols. (London, 1805–10).

De Gray Birch – De Gray Birch, W., *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 6 vols (London: British Museum, 1887–1900).

The following table includes extant matrices, impressions and casts of the seals mentioned on the plan, representing the progress to date on the survey of the sigillographic collections in Norwich Castle Museum.

No. on plan	Blomefield (1st edn) description	Blomefield (2nd edn) description	Extant object (matrix, impression, cast)	Bibliographic references
140		The Seal of the Corporation for the Norfolk Clergymen's Widows and Orphans. <i>1 Kings</i> , chap. xvii. v. 14, 16.		
141		The Seal of the Corporation for the Suffolk Clergymen's Widows and Orphans. <i>John</i> , chap. vi. ver. 9.	NCM casts: Colman 130, E, Norwich 86 & E Norwich 86.1	
146	The Seal No. 146, is the Office Seal of John Salmon Bishop of Norwich, Anno 1300; on which is represented our Saviour on a Throne, and under him, the bishop on his Knees, praying as the Words round the Seal shews, Dirige Pontificis Vitam, Deus Alme, Johannis (see fo. 353)	The Office Seal of Bishop John Salmon, Anno 1300; <i>for explanations of this and the following Seals, &c. see chap. xlv. p. 571.</i>	NCM casts: Colman 18, Neville-Rolfe 98.	De Gray Birch, I, cat. nos 2032–2034.
147	147, is the Seal of Anthony de Bek, Bishop here, A°. 1337. He is represented standing in his Pontificalibus, with his Crosier in his Hand, and his paternal Arms under him, and this round him, Sigillum Antonij Dei Gratia Episcopi Norwycensis (see fo. 359).	The Seal of Bishop Anthony de Bek, A°. 1337.	NCM casts: Colman 7 & Colman 7.1	
148	148, is the Seal of the Prior of Canterbury, as Guardian of the Spiritualities of the See, during all Vacancies; it is very antient, and represents the Face of the Father, as an antient Man, the Circumscription is, Sigillum Commissarii - - - Priors - - - Cantuariæ.	The Ancient Seal of the Prior of Canterbury, as Guardian to the See during its vacancies.		
149	149, is the Seal of the Sacrist's Office in Norwich Priory; it represents the Sacrist, as a Monk in his Habit, holding the Church in one Hand, and the Key of it in the other, to shew his Office in keeping the Keys of it, and round it is, Sigillum Sacriste Ecclesie Sancte Trinitatis Norwyci.	The Seal of Office of Sacrist in Norwich Priory.	NCM casts: Colman 87, Neville-Rolfe G57, C Norfolk 49.	De Gray Birch, I, cat. no. 3770

<i>No. on plan</i>	<i>Blomefield (1st edn) description</i>	<i>Blomefield (2nd edn) description</i>	<i>Extant object (matrix, impression, cast)</i>	<i>Bibliographic references</i>
150	150, is the antient Seal used by the Archdeacon of Norwich, and his Official; it exhibits the Father sitting on his Throne, and the Spirit over his Head, as a Dove; and in his Right Hand a Mound or Globe, to represent that the World is in his Hand; and on it is a Cross, intimating our Saviour's Passion, by which he redeemed the World; round the Seal is, <i>Sigillum Officialis Archidiaconi Norwici</i> .	The Seal of the Official of the Archdeacon of Norwich.	NCM casts: Colman 55, Colman 55.1, Neville-Rolfe G60, E Norwich 57.	De Gray Birch, I, cat no. 2110
151	151, the antient Seal of the Bishop's Consistory Court, in which the Church is engraven, and the Legend, <i>Sigillum Cathedralis Consistorij Norwycensis</i> .	The Ancient Seal of the Bishop's Consistory.		
152	152, is much the same Seal, belonging to the said Archdeacon's Office, as appears by the Circumscription, <i>Sigillum Officialitatis Archidiaconi Norwici</i> .	The Seal of the Officialy of the Archdeacon of Norwich.		
153	153, is the Seal of the Dean & Deany of the City of Norwich, on which is, <i>Sigillum Decani Norwici ad Causas</i> .	The Seal of the Dean of the City of Norwich.		
154	154, is Archbishop Parker's Office Seal, which see described at fo. 224, where (155) his private Seal is also described, and N ^o . 145, is the Ewer given by him to the City, see fo. 220. This is graven on the outward Bottom of the Bason, <i>Matthaeus Parker Norwicen: Archieps: Cantuar. dedit eidem Civitati 1^o Jan. A^o. Dom. 1569, et A^o Consecrationis suae xi^o 9/Etatis verò suae 66. Unciæ 175.</i>	Archbishop Parker's Office Seal.		
155		Archbishop Parker's Private Seal.		
162	162, is the Seal of the Abby of St Bennet at Holm; of which the Bishop of Norwich is now Abbot, and the only One in all England? I have seen some larger than this, but the Device is the same, viz St Bennet sitting on a Throne, holding a Book in his Right-Hand, and his pastoral Staff in his Left, and this round him, <i>Sigillum Ecclesie Sancti Benedicti de Hulmo</i> .	The Seal of the Abbey of St Bennet at the Holm.	NCM casts: Colman 88, Colman 235, Neville-Rolfe G27, C Norfolk 29.	De Gray Birch, I, cat no. 3300.
164	164, is the antient Seal of the Archdeacon of Norfolk, and his Official, on which is St Michael and the Dragon, and round him, <i>Sigillum Officialis Domini Archidiaconi Norfolkie</i> .	The Seal of the Official of the Archdeacon of Norfolk.		
165	165, is the Seal of the Commissary of that Archdeacon, with the same Device, & this round it, <i>Sigillum Commissarii & Officialis Archidiaconi Norff.</i>	Seal of the Commissary of the Archdeacon of Norfolk.		
166	166, is the Seal of the Office of the said Archdeacon, on which is a Man's Head shaven, and a Hand from above, over it; implying the Power of his Office over the Clergy, as to examination for Holy Orders &c. round it is, <i>Sigillum Officialitatis Archidiaconi Norfolkie</i> .	The Seal of the Officiality of the Archdeacon of Norfolk	NCM casts: Colman 41, E Norwich 64.	Blomefield, II, p. 894.
167	167, is the Seal of the Sheriff of Norfolk, the Castle and Crown; the last of which intimates whence he derives his Authority; and the former shews, the Trust reposed in him.	The Seal of the Office of the Sheriff of Norfolk		
168	168, is the Seal of Magdalen Hospital by Norwich; on it represented the Virgin holding our Saviour in her Arms, and the Master of the Hospital praying to him; over her Head are two Cherubims, and round it this Prayer, <i>Te precor, Maria, Magdalene serva Magistrum</i> .	The Seal of St Mary Magdalen's Hospital by Norwich.		
170(a)	170, the Crest of the City Arms, antiently the Mayor's Pocket Seal;	The Crest, being formerly the	NCM casts: Colman 173,	Blomefield, II, pp.

<i>No. on plan</i>	<i>Blomefield (1st edn) description</i>	<i>Blomefield (2nd edn) description</i>	<i>Extant object (matrix, impression, cast)</i>	<i>Bibliographic references</i>
	circumscribed, NORWYCVS. On a Castle with the Portcullis down, a Person representing Norwich, holding a Crown in the Right-Hand, to shew it's Obedience to the King; and the Left-Hand held up to Heaven, intimating, that the Crown it Self, and City also, hath it's Dependence thence.	Mayor's Pocket Seal.	Neville-Rolfe G 48.	894-5; De Gray Birch, I, cat no. 1084.
170(b)		The Crest, being formerly the Mayor's Pocket Seal.	NCM matrix: 1920.47; cast: L Norfolk 24 and impression: L Norfolk 24.1.	
171	171, is the oldest Common Seal, made when the City began to be govern'd by Bailiffs; it represents a Castle only, with a Watchman at it's Entrance, and is circumscribed Sigillum Ballivorum Norwici.	The most ancient Common Seal, in the Bailiff's time.	NCM casts: Colman 167, Neville-Rolfe G41, L Norfolk 21, L Norfolk 21.1, L Norfolk 21.2.	De Gray Birch, II, cat. nos 5234-5; Blomefield, II, 895.
172	This continued in Use 'till Edward III. Time, and when that Prince granted the City an Addition to their Arms, of part of the English Arms, viz a Lyon passant guardant Or. they had a new Seal (as N ^o . 172) cut, which they used sometimes single, but often as a Reverse to the Old Seal; it hath the Lyon aforesaid, and round it, in conjoin'd Letters this, Cum isto signo, novum tibi sum, Norwyce, Sigillum.	The New Reverse, added in Edward the Third's time.	NCM casts: Colman 168, Neville-Rolfe G42, L Norfolk 22, L Norfolk 22.1, L Norfolk 22.2, L Norfolk 22.3.	De Gray Birch, II, 143, cat. nos 5234-5; Blomefield, II, 895.
173	173, is the Seal of the Mayor of the Staple at Norwich, which you may see described at fo. 69. It is now in Use, all Testimonials beyond the Seas being sealed with it, and in 1300; an Officer was elected annually to keep the Statute Staple Seal.	The Seal of the Mayor of the Staple, with Edw. the Third's Head.	NCM casts: Colman 172, Colman 277, Neville-Rolfe G47, L Norfolk 35, L Norfolk 35.1.	De Gray Birch, I, cat. no. 1083; Blomefield, II, p. 895.
174	On it's being made a Corporation, to be govern'd by a Mayor, Sheriffs, &c. the old Common Seals were broken and sent to London, to Henry Couperre Goldsmith, who run'd them down, and made the new Common Seal, the Mayor's Seal &c. for which 4l. 13s. was paid by the Chamberlains; this is N ^o 174, and is now the City Seal; it hath the Castle and Lion of England at the Bottom, and round it, Sigillum Commune Civitatis Norwici. The Common Seal of the City of Norwich.	The Common, or City Seal, now in use.	NCM casts: Colman 169, Neville-Rolfe G43, L Norfolk 18, L Norfolk 18.1, L Norfolk 18.2, L Norfolk 18.3, L Norfolk 18.4.	De Gray Birch, II, cat. nos 5229-30; Blomefield, II, p. 895.
175	The Reverse of it is, N ^o 175, in which was the Representation of the Holy Trinity, the Father on a Throne, a Star on each side of his Head, holding our Saviour on the Cross, and Dove over his Head; on each side is a shield, supported by an Angel; the first is France and England quarter'd, and the second is St George, and the same Circumscription as on the former Side; and thus it remained 'till 1686, and then they paid 2l. 15s. for taking out the Trinity, and putting in it's Place, the Word IMMANUEL, as it now remains.	The Reverse, the Trinity being taken out and the word Immanuel put in its place.	NCM casts: (before alteration) Colman 174, L Norfolk 19, L Norfolk 19.1, L Norfolk 19.2, L Norfolk 19.3; (after alteration) Colman 170, Neville-Rolfe G44, L Norfolk 20, L Norfolk 20.1, L Norfolk 20.2, L Norfolk 20.3, L Norfolk 20.4.	De Gray Birch, II, cat. nos 5229-30; Blomefield, II, p. 895.
176	The Mayors two Seals were then also made, that in present Use is N ^o 176, and is described at fo. 91. The other which was exact like it, (only the Trinity as on the common Seal, instead of the Resurrection) was the Seal ad Causas, or Office Seal, but was defaced at the Reformation.	The Mayor's Seal, now in use.	NCM casts: Colman 171, Neville-Rolfe G45, L Norfolk 23, L Norfolk 23.1, L Norfolk 23.2, L Norfolk 23.3, L Norfolk 23.4.	De Gray Birch, II, 144, cat. no. 5236. Blomefield, II, p. 895.
177	177, was the Seal of Sir John Clifton of Bokenham Castle Knt. Captain or Governour of the City in 1442, when the Liberties were seized, it hath round it,	Sir John Clifton's Seal, when he was		De Gray Birch, II, cat. no. 8678;

<i>No. on plan</i>	<i>Blomefield (1st edn) description</i>	<i>Blomefield (2nd edn) description</i>	<i>Exstant object (matrix, impression, cast)</i>	<i>Bibliographic references</i>
	Sigillum Johannis Clifton Militis. And the Arms of Clifton quartering Caiiy; supported by two Ran Deers Er. on a Helmet a Wreath, on which the Crest, between two Bullocks Horns, a Bunch of Peacocks Feathers proper.	Governour of the City.		Blomefield, II, p. 895.
178	The City Sheriffs Seal now in Use, was made with the Common Seal, it hath the Castle & Lyon over it, is marked N° 178, and this is round it, Sigillum Officij Vicecomitum Civitatis Norwici.	The Seal of the Office of the City Sheriffs, now in use.	NCM casts: Colman 198, Neville-Rolfe G46, L Norfolk 28.	De Gray Birch, II, 144, cat. no. 5237; Blomefield, II, p. 895.
179	The Chamberlains Seal N° 179, was made in 1448, for then 5 s. was paid for an Ounce of silver, making and engraving the Chamberlains Seal; it is now in Use, and hath the Lion under the Castle, and this round it Sigillum Officij Camerariorum Civitatis Norwici.	The Chamberlain's Seal, now in use.	NCM matrix: 1905.34; casts: Colman 175, Colman 208, Neville-Rolfe G49, L Norfolk 30, L Norfolk 30.1.	De Gray Birch, II, cat. nos 5238-9; Blomefield, II, p. 895.
180	N° 180, is the Seal now in Use, of the Clerk of the Peace of the City, in which the Lion is under the Castle, no Legend.	Seal of the Clerk of the Peace for the City, now in use.	NCM casts: L Norfolk 26, L Norfolk 26.1.	Blomefield, II, p. 895.
181	N° 181, is the Seal of the Convent of the Carmelites or White Friars; on it is a Castle, shewing the City to be their Patrons; and under it, the Virgin Mary, holding our Saviour in her Arms, on each Side two Friars in their proper Habits, two of which have Labels from their Mouths, on which, 1. Ave Fili Pater. 2. Virgo Divina Mater. And round it, Sigillum Commune Conventus Norwyci, Ordinis beatæ Mariæ Genetricis Dei, Fratrum Carmelitarum.	The Seal of the Convent of the White Friars.		Blomefield, II, p. 895.
182	N° 182, is the Seal of the Franciscan or Grey Friars, which represented the Entrance of the Church of their Convent, and in the Door-space stands the Seraphick Father, St Francis himself; it is thus circumscribed, Sigillum Commune Prioris et Conventus in Norwico Fratrum Franciscanorum.	The Seal of the Franciscan or Gray Friars.		Blomefield, II, p. 896.
183	N° 183, is the Seal of the Friars Preachers or Black Friars, which hath this around it, Sigillum Commune Fratrum Predicatorum Norwicensium. The Impress is remarkable, at the Entrance of the Church, stands St Dominick their Patron, with a Frier behind him, and opposite to him is a Person in a high crown'd Hat, & a Man behind him; between them on the Ground is a Fire burning, at which the Person discoursing with the Saint, points, and between them is a Book, thrown out of the Fire by the violence of the Flames; just by St Dominick's Forehead is a Cross fitchè, and over his Head are the seven Starrs; this alludes to the Story in the Life of the Saint, in the Golden Legend fo. 128, 'it semed to a Woman that was God-mother to hym at Fonte, and held him, that the Chylde Domynek had a Sterre ryghte clere in his Foreheed, whyche there, the one in Substance is, that as the Saint one Day preached against the Hereticks, he wrote down all his Authorities for his Doctrine, in a Schedule or Book, and gave it to the chief of them to object to, and told them, that if the Faith contained therein was true, if they threw it into a Fire, it would not burn; upon which the Hereticks assembled, and made Trial of that Thing, and to their great surprize, as often as they threw the book into the Fire it sprang out again safe, and they could not burn it; the second is also of the like Nature; when at a solemn Disputation it was agreed that the different Opinions should be written	The Seal of the Friars-Preachers.	NCM casts: Neville-Rolfe G78, C Norfolk 53 (not traced)	De Gray Birch, I, cat. no. 3774; Blomefield, II, p. 896.

<i>No. on plan</i>	<i>Blomefield (1st edn) description</i>	<i>Blomefield (2nd edn) description</i>	<i>Extant object (matrix, impression, cast)</i>	<i>Bibliographic references</i>
	in several Books, and committed to the Flames, and that Book that remain'd unburnt, should be holden to contain the true Faith; lo! the Books of the Heresies were burn'd, but St Dominick's was not onely saved and not brente, but sprange oute of the Fire without hurtyng; and its was cast in the seconde tyme, and it lepte oute again without brennyngc.'			
184	N ^o . 184, is the Seal of Walter de Suffield, that worthy Bishop of this See, Founder of the Hospital of St Giles; he is represented standing on a Church, to shew that he presided over the Church here; he is in his Pontificalibus, with his Crosier in one Hand, and his other lifted up to Heaven; on each side of him is a Bull's Head, the Emblem of St Luke, who most probably was his Patron Saint; round the seal is this, <i>Walterus Misericordie Divina Norwicensis Episcopus</i> .	Seal of Bishop Suffield, Founder of St Giles's Hospital.	NCM casts: Colman 12, Neville-Rolfe G93.	De Gray Birch, I, cat. no. 2024; Blomefield, II, p. 896.
185	N ^o . 185, is the Reverse of his Seal, on which our Saviour sits on a Throne, having a Star on each Side of him, one Hand is held up to Heaven, and the other points at the Wound in his Side, made by the peircing of the Spear, and he speaks to the Bishop on his Knees under him, in the following Words, which are engraved round the seal. <i>Hoc te Tormento, redimi, Waltere, Memento, By this Torment I have redeemed the, And therefore Walter, now remember me.</i>	The Reverse of his Seal.	NCM casts: Colman 13, Neville-Rolfe G94.	De Gray Birch, I, cat. no. 2024; Blomefield, II, p. 896.
186	N ^o . 186, is the Seal of William de Suffield Archdeacon of Norwich, his Brother, who was also a liberal Benefactor to St Giles's Hospital, (see fo. 347.) he is represented in his Archidiaconal Habit, holding a Book before him, and on the rim of the Seal is, <i>Sigillum Willelmi Archidiaconi Norwicensis</i> .	Seal of Archdeacon Suffield, his Brother.	NCM casts: Neville-Rolfe G58.	De Gray Birch, I, cat. no. 2105; Blomefield, II, p. 896.
187	N ^o . 187, is the Seal of the Friars of the Order of the Sac; on it is represented St Edmund with his Crown on, tied to a Tree naked, with his Body full of Arrows, he being martir'd in that manner by the Danes; round it is <i>Sigillum Prioris Fratrum de Penitencia Ihesu Christi de Norwico</i> .	The Seal of the Friars of the Sac.	NCM casts: Colman 154, C Norfolk 56.	De Gray Birch, I, cat. no. 3777; Blomefield, II, p. 897.
188	N ^o 188, is the Seal of St Giles's Hospital, round which is this, <i>Sigillum Magistri et Fratrum Hospitalis Sancti Egidij de Norwyco</i> . At the Bottom is a Croslet Patte and a Miter, to shew it was founded by a Bishop, and was dependant on the Church; in the Midle is St Giles sitting in a Chair, and a Hind with it's Head in his Lap, and a Branch or Tree sprouting out before him; the Reason of which Impress we may learn from the Life of that Saint in the aforesaid Legendary, fo. 157. 'And after he defyr'd to go into the Deserte, and departed covertely, and dwelled there longe with an Hermyte that was an holy Man, and there by his Merites he chaced away the Sterlyte & Bareynes that was in that Countree, and caused plente of Goodes. And when he had done this Myracle, he dout'd the Peryll of the Glorie humayne, and lefte the Place, and entred ferdre into Deserte, and there he founde a Pytte & a lytell Welle and a fayr Hynde, whyche withoute doubte, was purveyed of God for to norryce hym, & at certaine Hores mynystred her Mylke to hym. And on a Tyme Servauntes of the Kynge rode on huntyng, and they thought that she was so fayre that they followed her with Houndes, and whan she was sore constrained, she fledde to scour to the Feet of St Gyles, whom she norryshed; & thenne he was moche abashed when he sawe her soo chased more than she was wonte to be, & thenne he sprang up,	The Seal of St Giles's Hospital.	NCM casts: Colman 126, Neville-Rolfe G70, C Norfolk 58 (missing?)	De Gray Birch, I, 689, cat. no. 3779; Blomefield, II, pp. 896-7.

<i>No. on plan</i>	<i>Blomefield (1st edn) description</i>	<i>Blomefield (2nd edn) description</i>	<i>Extant object (matrix, impression, cast)</i>	<i>Bibliographic references</i>
	and espied the Hunters, and thenne he prayed to our Lord Jhesu Criste, that lyke as he sente her to hym, for to be noryshed by her, that he wolde save her. Thenne the Houndes durst not proche her by the space of a Stones caste, but tourned home ayen and toke no Thyng. And whan the Kyng herde saye of thys Thyng, e had Suspecyon what it myght be, and went and warned the Bysshop, and both went thyder with grete Multitude of Hunters, and whan the Houndes were on the Place where the Hyndes was, they durste not go forth as they dyde before. But thenne they all envynnoned the Busshe for to see what there was but that Busshe was so thycke, that no Man ne Best myght entre in, for the Brembles and Thornes that were there; and thennes one of the Knyghtes drewe up an Arowe folfly, for to make it aferde, and to sprynge oute; but he wounded and hurte the Holy Man, whiche cessed not to praye for the fayre Hynde. And after this, the Hunters made away with thyr Swerdes, and wente unto the Pytte, and sawe there thys auncyente Man, which was clothed in the Habyte of a Monke, and of a ryght honourable Figure and Parure, & the Hynde lyenge by him; and the Kyng and the Bysshop want alone to hym, & demaunded hym fro whens he was? and what he was? and why he had taken so o grette a thykenesse of Deserte, and of whome he was so hurte. And he answered ryght honourably to every Demaunde. And when they had herde hym speke, they thought that he was an holy Man, and required him humbly of Pardone. And they sente to hym Maysters & Surgeyns to hele his Wounde, and offered hym many Yestes. But he wolde never lay Madycynes to, ne receive theyr Gyftes, but refuted them. And he prayed our Lorde that he myght never he hole thereof in his Lyf, for he knewe well that Vertue sholde prouffite to hym in Infirmyte. And the Kyng wysyted often &c. and when he returned to his Monasterye, he made a lame Man to go, &c.' For these Reasons he was accounted Patron Saint of all the Old, Decrepit, and maimed; and Hospitals of that kind, were generally dedicated to him; so frequent, that it occasioned the Proverb of A lame Giles, to be used, when any one appeared lame enough, as that intimated, to be put in such places.			
189	Nº. 189, is the new Seal of Chapel Field College, on which the Virgin with out Saviour in her Arms, stands at the Enterance of the Church, and the Dean of the College in his proper Habit on his Knees is at the Bottom praying to her; for the Legend see fo. 607.	The New Seal of Chapel-field College.	NCM casts: Colman 132, Neville-Rolfe G73, C Norfolk 63.1; impression: C Norfolk 63.	De Gray Birch, I, cat. no. 3785; Blomefield, II, p. 897.
190	Nº. 190, is the antient Seal of the College, which hath the same Legend, but the Field is only Fleure, with a Cross at Top.	The Old Seal of that College	NCM casts: Neville-Rolfe G68, C Norfolk 62.	De Gray Birch, I, cat. no. 3784; Blomefield, II, p. 897.
191	Nº. 191, is the large Common Seal of Carrow Priory, commonly called Carrow Abby, & this, Sigillum Sancte Marie de Karrowe. The Impress is the Virgin holding our Saviour, the Prioress on her Knees before her in her proper Habit, with a Label from her Mouth, on which, Ave Dei Pater. Over her Head is a Staff and Crescent, and a Hand pointing at them from a Cloud; the Star which	The large Common Seal of Carrow Abbey.	NCM casts: Colman 77, Neville-Rolfe G10, C Norfolk 8, C Norfolk 8.1, C Norfolk 8.2, C Norfolk 8.3, C Norfolk 8.4, C Norfolk 8.5.	De Gray Birch, I, cat. no. 2878; Blomefield, II, p. 897.

<i>No. on plan</i>	<i>Blomefield (1st edn) description</i>	<i>Blomefield (2nd edn) description</i>	<i>Extant object (matrix, impression, cast)</i>	<i>Bibliographic references</i>
	is near our Saviour's Head, denotes his Epiphany; and the Crescent over her, the Increase of his Gospel,			
192	N ^o . 192, is the small Common Seal, on which the Prioress is on her Knees before the Virgin and Christ, and this round it, Sigillum Priorisse et Conventus de Karhowe.	The Small Common Seal there.	NCM casts: Colman 78, Neville-Rolfe G11, C Norfolk 9, C Norfolk 9.1, C Norfolk 9.2.	De Gray Birch, I, cat. no. 2880; Blomefield, II, p. 897.
193	N ^o 193, is the Seal of the exempt Spiritual Jurisdiction of that House, on which the Virgin holding our Saviour in one Hand, and a Scepter in the other, sits on a Throne, and round it, Sigillum Priorisse Sancte Marie Ecclesie de Karhowe ad Causas.	The Seal of the Spiritual Jurisdiction of Carrow.	NCM casts: Colman 79, Neville-Rolfe G12, C Norfolk 10, C Norfolk 10.1.	De Gray Birch, I, cat. no. 2881; Blomefield, II, p. 897.
194	N ^o . 194, is the private Seal of the Prioresses, on it is a Crucifix, over which, the Sun, Moon, and Stars darkened; on one Side, the Abbess standing with her Hands join'd and lifted up in Prayer; and on the other Side, the Confessor of the House in the same Posture.	The private Seal of the Prioresses there.		Blomefield, II, p. 898.
Unlisted		Seal of the Franciscans of Norwich.		

Seal finds in Wales¹

David H. Williams

The story of seal finds in Wales stretches back for over 200 years, and currently some six or seven seal dies or matrices are discovered each year in the Principality. In the nineteenth century seals were mostly discovered by chance – and to an extent this still holds true. In the twentieth century, archaeological excavations or building works unearthed many seals, whilst in more recent decades the arrival of the metal detector has further increased the numbers found. The consequence of all this activity is that a very fine assemblage of seals, of practically every class, now exists – mostly deposited in museums but some still in private hands.² In what follows we can review some of that material and offer some reflection upon the quality and range of material discovered as well as consider the context in which seals were located.

One of the finest seal matrices ever discovered in Wales is the obverse half of the seal of the Chancery of Monmouth (Fig. 14.1), dating from the reign of Edward IV, which can be shown to have been in use, both for the Chancery and the Exchequer of Monmouth, by 1475 until at least 1622. Thereafter the seal matrix must have vanished, might it have been during the Civil War? It only re-emerged before or about 1850 when it was discovered by a poor man in the river Wye, by which the town and castle of Monmouth stand. It was said to have been “fished out of the river”. After its discovery, it was used for a time as the bob of a clock pendulum, but by 1860 was in the keeping

of the noted Monmouthshire antiquary, Thomas Wakeman.³ It was later presented by another keen student of Monmouthshire’s past, F. J. Mitchell, to Caerleon Museum, and now reposes in the National Museum in Cardiff.⁴

The seal depicts the monarch on horseback, and his shield and horse caparisons bear three lions passant guardant, with a label of three points each charged with three fleurs-de-lis. The Lancastrian scholar, the late Sir Robert Somerville pointed out that these arms were those of the Duchy of Lancaster, of which Monmouth formerly formed part.⁵ The ascription to Edward IV stems from that monarch being not only king but also Duke of Lancaster. The matrix still bears one of the (originally four) perforated lobes by which it would have been fixed to its missing reverse face in the process of sealing. The other three projections have long been sawn off. Prior to the reign of Edward IV, the chancery of Monmouth employed a different seal.⁶

The legend, in Black Letter script, reads:

S : Edwardi : dei : gra : reg : Angl : t : Francie :
cancellarie : sue : de : Monemuth

Another official seal, discovered, by David Lewis in 1987, working with a metal detector in the Portfield at Haverfordwest, was the matrix of the obverse face of the Seal for the Taking of Recognizances within the Town and County of Haverfordwest. Hitherto, it had only been known for its engraving in Lewis’

Fig. 14.1. Seal of the Chancery of Monmouth: obverse face, NMW Seal Die 27 (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



Fig. 14.2. Seal for the Taking of Recognizances within the Town and County of Haverfordwest: obverse face. NLW Badminton Deed [Group 1] 1565 (of 1452) and Milborne Deed 103 (fragment from 1447). (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



Fig. 14.3. Bulla of Pope Honorius III: obverse, NMW, Accession File 38.422. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).

Fig. 14.4. (far right) Bulla of Pope Honorius III: reverse, NMW, Accession File 38.422. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



missing reverse face depicts a sailing ship, the obverse side (Fig. 14.2) shows a triple-towered embattled castle, with its portcullis closed. From the central tower, a man blows a horn to the right, whilst in each side-tower flies an heraldic flag. The supporters are (on the left) a lion rampant, and (on the right) a bird, perhaps an eagle, resting and reguardant.

The story of discovery by chance continued in 1875 when a young boy, Griffith Hughes, fell from a tree on the slopes of Dolwyddelan Castle in Snowdonia, down on to a heap of small stones. He later said: 'Before I moved, with my hands all bruised, here was the seal before my eyes in the stones'.⁸ The seal was no ordinary seal; it was a papal *bull* of Honorius III, who reigned 1216–1227, and this was a Welsh castle built by Prince Llywelyn the Great at this very time. Honorius III addressed two letters to Prince Llywelyn: one in 1217 urging him not to enter in to league with France against the newly crowned Henry III of England; and one in 1222, assuring the prince that his son, David, born by his wife Princess Joan succeed him; Joan also received a letter in 1226 declaring her legitimacy.⁹ This seal must have survived from one of those papal missives (Figs 14.3 and 14.4).

Lead wears well, and so most papal leaden seals are finely preserved long after the missive to which they were attached has vanished. Indeed, some twenty-five medieval papal *bullae* have been recorded in Wales; ten of them on, or close to, the sites of former Cistercian abbeys:¹⁰ three have been found at Cwmhir Abbey in Radnorshire,¹¹ and one of Gregory





Fig. 14.5. Bulla of Gregory XI: obverse, National Museum Seal B11. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



Fig. 14.6. Bulla of Gregory XI: reverse, National Museum Seal B11. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



Fig. 14.7. Bulla of Alexander IV NMW, Seal B9. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



Fig. 14.8. Bulla of Nicholas V. NMW PA 2010. 94. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).

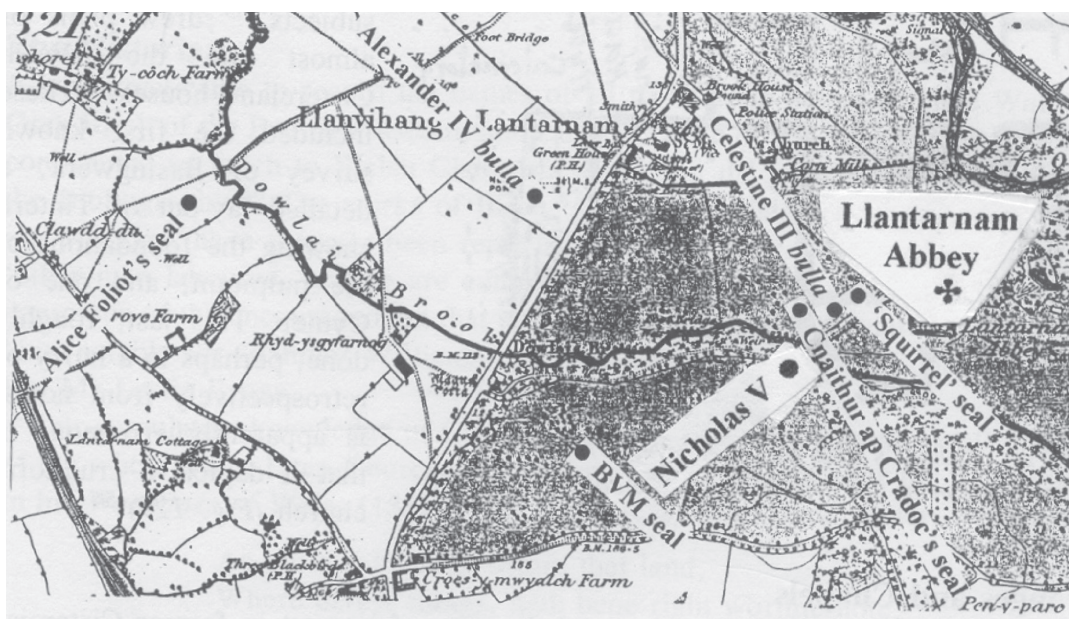
XI (1370–78; Figs 14.5 and 14.6) on the site of Strata Florida Abbey in Ceredigion¹² – the imagery remained pretty constant for much of the Middle Ages: the busts of Peter and Paul on the one face, the name of the pontiff on the other..

Considerable road-works in the vicinity of Llantarnam abbey north of Newport a few years ago turned up two papal seals: one of Celestine III (1191–98); the other of Alexander IV (1254–61; Fig. 14.7)¹³ Pope Alexander changed his seal early in his pontificate, and it has been suggested that the principal difference between them was in the number of the stops forming the circumference.¹⁴ Only 2 years ago, the broken half of another papal seal, that of Nicholas V (1447–1455; Fig. 14.8), was found close to Llantarnam¹⁵. Were such half-bullae found in fields bisected by later ploughing activity, or were they in their lifetime deliberately cut?¹⁶

Why this concentration of papal bullae at Cistercian sites (Fig. 14.9)? Perhaps because the inheritors of those sites threw out documents of no use to them, or quite possibly because the monks hoped their monastery might be refounded and buried their deeds against such a day; either way, the documents perished, the lead seals survived. One of the factors which led to the downfall and execution of the last abbot of Woburn in Bedfordshire, was that he had not surrendered his papal letters and was busy making copies of them.¹⁷

Not only papal seals, but also several small personal seals have been found in the vicinity

Fig. 14.9. Location of Seals found in the vicinity of Llantarnam Abbey. (Drawn on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 6 in map, with assistance from Dr J. P. Davis).



of Llantarnam abbey, probably of travellers who had been staying in the monastery guest-house and mislaid their seals, or might there have been an affray at the monastery gate and their seals stolen? Another possibility is that they are burial finds.¹⁸

The sharp eyes of the young also meant that, in 1963, an 8 year old girl, Margaret Rowley, far from Wales, discovered a Welsh seal on land once belonging to Leicester abbey in a waste tip of spoil from the construction of the M1 motorway: none less than the seal of the ecclesiastical college of Abergwili just outside Carmarthen (Fig. 14.10).¹⁹ The college was founded at Llangadog in 1283, but moved to Abergwili about 1292. A new constitution in 1334 meant that the precentor became the lead cleric in this college of some 20 priests: hence the legend – *The seal of the Precentor and Chapter of the Collegiate Church of Abergwili*. Was it stolen from the college? More likely it was lost by the precentor on a journey. There is evidence that Leicester was a central point for occasional gatherings of religious superiors.²⁰ The seal depicts St Maurice, a soldier martyr of the third century Theban Legion, and this reflects the Anglo-Norman influence common in parts of south Wales of adopting non-Celtic dedications.

Yet another seal spotted by a youngster was found by 5 year old Master B. Jones of Cardiff. Taken on an outing to Barry Island by his parents in 1948 what did he find on

the beach, but the lead seal of Bishop Giraud, bishop of Vaison, in Vaucluse, France, from 1271 to 1295.²¹ The obverse shows the bishop in pontificals, the reverse a triple-towered castle as on the counter-seal of that town. Why this seal travelled so far from his diocese, we shall never know. It has been suggested that there were forgeries of this seal, but somehow the seal or a copy found its way to Wales. The legend is incomplete (Figs 14.11 and 14.12).

Indeed, several seals have been found on the south Wales coastline – the inference must be that they came by sea, and perhaps were lost in shipwreck or when the owners were clambering out of a boat. At least two seals have been found on the shore in Swansea Bay²² while in 1999, a metal detectorist found a silver seal of an abbot William of Neath on the beach at Aberavon, near Port Talbot (Figs 14.13 and 14.14).²³ Neath abbey lies several miles to the west, and it must be assumed that the abbot was travelling in one of his monastery's boats, perhaps on a visit to Margam abbey a little to the east, but some how lost his seal from his waist belt whilst landing. Some of these coastal seals may have been a consequence of ship wreck.

Abbot William may have been the William of St Donat's who was abbot of Neath from 1326 until at least 1341, but the black-letter legend would suggest a somewhat later date, while the list of Neath's known abbots is far from complete. The seal has typical imagery of the period: the Blessed Virgin, patroness of the



Fig. 14.10. Seal of the Collegiate Church of Abergwili, Carmarthen, National Museum Die 1. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).

Cistercian Order, standing crowned beneath an elaborate canopy, with in the base a tonsured and cowled abbot holding his pastoral staff. The legend, in open Black Lettering, reads: *Sigillū Willme abbatis de nāth*

Much further west, not far from the Old Quay in Carmarthen, a Mr Hodson was replacing in 1988 a sewer under No. 3 St Mary's Street, when he chanced upon, at a depth of 12 ft (3.66 m) below present street level, another seal which very probably came by sea. It was the bronze matrix of the seal of the medieval borough of Grampound in Cornwall (Fig. 14.15).²⁴ That borough was granted its first charter in 1332 by John Plantagenet, earl of Cornwall, who died in Scotland four years later. He was but a boy of 16 when in his name the charter was granted, and Grampound remained a borough until 1822. The seal depicts a great bridge of two arches, on the foremost of which is a shield bearing the arms of the young earl:



Fig. 14.11. Seal of the Bishop of Vaison, France: obverse, NMW Accession File 55.202. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



Fig. 14.12. Seal of the Bishop of Vaison, France: reverse, NMW Accession File 55.202. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).

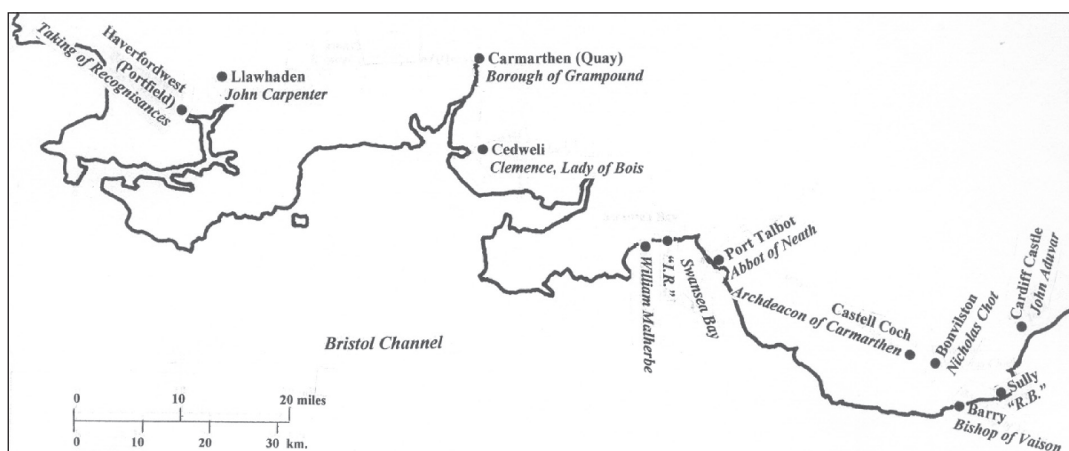


Fig. 14.13. South and south-west Wales: locations of Seals mentioned in the text.

Fig. 14.14. Seal of Abbot William of Neath. NMW, Seal W 563. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



Fig. 14.15. Seal of the Borough of Grampound, Cornwall, NMW C40 (impression). (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



a bordure charged with seven roundels. This reflects the Norman-French name for the village of Grand Pont, the great bridge over the river Fal. And the legend (in Latin) spells it out: *'The seal of the provost and burgesses of the borough of Grampound'*.

Another major location for seal finds are routeways, along which a traveller may have mislaid his seal when sleeping rough or if waylaid by robbers. A fine example is the bronze seal of Walter Wynter, archdeacon of



Fig. 14.16. Seal of Archdeacon Walter of Carmarthen, NMWD.12. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).

Carmarthen about 1330, found in Glamorgan in 1991 (Fig. 14.16), in the vicinity of Castell Coch, Aberthyn, and not very far north of the medieval Portway, now followed in large measure by the A48 road.²⁵ The imagery is what we might expect of an archdeacon's seal: St Stephen, the first deacon, holding in his right hand three stones, reminding us of the manner of his martyrdom, and robed in a dalmatic – which later became a deacon's formal wear. The legend, in Lombardic Capital script, reads:

S' WALT' WYNT' A R C H I D E K E R M D Y N

Three years ago, a lead matrix, as to be expected finely preserved with remnant of the attachment loop (Fig. 14.17), was unearthed by metal detector in Monmouthshire close to an ancient ridgeway leading from Llangybi to Llanhenwg.²⁶ Bearing a fine stylised fleur de lis, very popular at the time, and dating perhaps from the late-thirteenth century, it is the seal of Tudor, the son of Ithel: two good Welsh names, but Tudor as a Christian name was far from common in the Gwent of those days; that, together with its almost roadside position, suggests that Tudor was on a journey, from

further north in Wales, when for some reason he mislaid his seal. There was and is a lot of woodland close by; could robbers have been lying in wait for passers by, sprung out and robbed Tudur of his cash and his seal?²⁷ The legend, given in Lombardic Capitals, reads: S' TVDER AB IThAEL

Another location where seals have been found is on, or close to the site, of a religious house – like the papal seals mentioned earlier. About 1807, there was found close to the site of Strata Florida abbey the fine silver seal of one of its fifteenth century abbots (Fig. 14.18).²⁸ When he passed away, his name was obliterated either so that the seal could not be used unlawfully, or to keep costs down by allowing his successor also to use it. It is again a typical abbatial seal of the period, depicting the Blessed Virgin Mary with the cowed abbot in prayer in the base and clutching his pastoral staff.

In black letter script, the legend reads:

Sigill'. abb'is de strata florida

A find of great importance was made 3 years ago by metal detector on the very site of a small Cistercian nunnery, at Llanllŷr, off the road between Aberystwyth and Lampeter (Fig. 14.19). The matrix is of weathered copper alloy, and so the legend is very corroded. The seal is that of a religious superior, with a book, presumably for the *Rule of St Benedict* held with the left hand, and the faint outline of the pastoral staff held by the right hand. Despite the absence of a wimple, it is very probably it is a seal of an abbess of the house – perhaps of the early fifteenth century.²⁹

Mostly when seals are found in Wales, the enquirer gives a precise grid reference. About 10 years ago, a finder brought two seals for identification, but was vague about their find spot, other than it was on the Halkyn Mountain in Flintshire. The one matrix is readily identified, as a business or *ad causas* seal of Richard Edenham, a Friar Minor, but also Bishop of Bangor for nearly 30 years, from 1465 to 1494 (Fig. 14.20). The legend tells us that this was his seal for affairs in the deanery of Dyffryn Clwyd, which until the mid-nineteenth century formed a detached portion laying within the diocese of St Asaph. The seal shows the bishop in a typical stance, standing mitred and vested under a gothic canopy, his right hand raised in blessing, pastoral staff (turned outwards) in his left hand.³⁰ In base,



Fig. 14.17. Seal of Tudur ap Ithel. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).

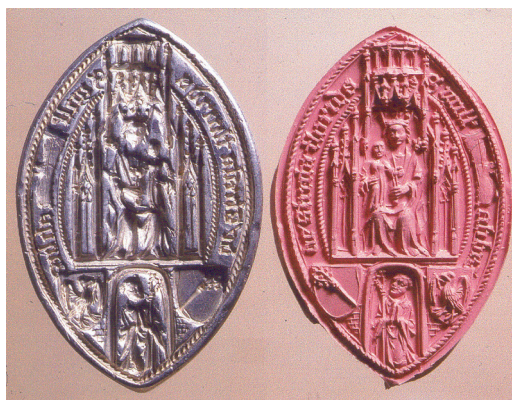


Fig. 14.18. Seal of an Abbot of Strata Florida, Ceredigion, NMW D.24. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



Fig. 14.19. Seal of an Abbess of Llanllŷr, Ceredigion. (Courtesy of Mrs Loveday Gee. Plate: National Museum of Wales).

there is a shield: three crowns in pale. The legend reads:

S' : Ricardi : bang' : epi / s : difr[y]ncloyd : ad : causa

The second seal which came in from Halkyn Mountain includes in its corroded legend the words 'Mary, Mother of God'. This has not been as yet positively identified, but it could be a capitular seal rather than an episcopal seal.³¹

Fig. 14.20. Seal of Bishop Richard of St Asaph for the Deanery of Dyffryn Chyd. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



Fig. 14.21. Seal of Hawys, Lady of Cyfeiliog, NMW D.32. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



Fig. 14.22. Seal of John Carpenter. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).

Ladies' seals are rarely discovered, but unearthed near Cedweli in 2003 was the copper alloy seal, measuring 43 × 26 mm, of one Clemence, Lady of Bois, wearing a full-length dress, with either shoulder-length hair or a head-scarf and holding an open book, perhaps a psalter. It dates from the second half of the thirteenth century; might Clemence have been the wife of an Anglo-Norman official resident here; Cedweli castle was close by; but holding a manor of Bois back in France? The Du Bois family were quite prominent. When in 1283 Edward I took the sons of David, the last native Prince of Wales, into custody, he committed them to the temporary care of one Reginald de Bois.³² The French legend reads:

S' CLEMENCE DAME DV BOIS

Much, much earlier, was found near Oswestry, the seal of Hawys, Lady of Cyfeiliog – the wife of Gruffydd ap Gwenwynwyn, lord of much of Powys in the late thirteenth century (Fig. 14.21). The shield on the left bears a lion rampant – her husband's arms; that on the right two lions passant – for Le Strange, her father's arms. This matrix is one of two known bronze copies made in Victorian times; the original die is preserved in Shrewsbury Museum.³³ Why found near Oswestry? Probably because in



1276, Edward I gave her the manor of Church Stretton in Shropshire, giving her the need to travel to and fro. At some point on one journey she became detached from her seal.

Most matrices found are of the personal seals of unknown individuals. Occasionally, they tell either in the legend or by the device, the occupation of the seal owner. A good example is the seal of John the Carpenter (Fig. 14.22), perhaps of the late thirteenth century, and found at Llawhaden in Pembrokeshire in 2006. The legend is explicit, naming *John the Carpenter*, and the device appears to be a pair of dividers.

Found in 2011 near Sully in the Vale of Glamorgan was a copper alloy seal displaying four barrels with the initials, *R.B.* above each. Measuring in diameter a little over 30 mm and perhaps fourteenth century in date, it is perhaps the trade seal of a brewer – or the seal adopted by someone with the surname of Brewer, if not the occupation (Fig. 14.23). The latter seems the more likely as the Brewer family had their own distinct arms.

Many smaller personal seals give the name of the owner in the legend, but only rarely is it possible to link them with an individual known from historic documentation of the time. It is very probable that the seal of Meurig ap Adam found in 2011 at Kemeys Commander in Monmouthshire (Fig. 14.24), is the seal of one of the sons of Adam Gwent, who was steward of Morgan ap Hywel, lord of Caerleon, who died in 1248. Adam had several children, some of them illegitimate; and one of them was named Meurig and he was alive in 1278.³⁴ This seal would fit in well with those dates, and while the find was several miles north of the lands given his family by Morgan, there could be several explanations for that.³⁵ The seal depicts an octfoil, and the legend in Lombardic Capitals reads:

S' MEVR[RV]CI AP ADAM

Who engraved these personal seals? We shall perhaps never know, but two early fourteenth-century matrices seals deserve a mention. The first bears the name of Nicholas Chot; the second of John Aduvar, possibly a corruption of John ap Ivor (Fig. 14.25).³⁶ The first was found in 1986 several miles west of Cardiff in the vicinity of Bonvilston; the second sometime before 1958 by a gardener digging in the grounds of Cardiff Castle. Both



Fig. 14.23. ?A brewer's seal. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



Fig. 14.24. Seal of Meurig ap Adam. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



Fig. 14.25. (left): Seal of Nicholas Chot; (right): Seal of John Aduvar, NMW, D 28 and 29 respectively. (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).

Fig. 14.26. *The Trostre Seal Mould.* (Courtesy of the National Museum of Wales).



matrices are of exactly the same diameter, 26 mm; and both have precisely the same floral device. They differ only in the legend, and in the material employed – latten in the first instance, lead in the second. It looks as if there was a medieval seal engraver in Cardiff, who prepared a number of designs, and simply added the legend on purchase.

Lastly, but far from least, some 20 years ago a carved small block of oolitic limestone was found during long-running excavations at the medieval village of Trostre, near Raglan, in Monmouthshire (Figs 14.26).³⁷ It appears to be a mould for making, though not engraving, seals, both circular and elliptical, and bearing the handling ridge which would be pierced for the attachment of one's seal to one's belt. Was such a mould carried around by an itinerant seal engraver?

This paper has attempted to give a glimpse of the wide variety of seal matrices found in the Principality. What is important always is to endeavour to relate seal finds to their historical, documentary and environmental setting; in other words, to place them in their context.

Notes

- 1 I am grateful to Evan Chapman and Mark Lodwick of the National Museum of Wales for their co-operation in the preparation of this paper, especially where the images are concerned.
- 2 One of the earliest listing of seals in a Welsh museum was that by the modeller and sigillarist R. Ready (1811–1901), who published 'A Catalogue of Seals connected with Wales in the Museums of Swansea, Caernarvon and Ludlow': *Archaeologia Cambrensis* [hereafter: *Arch. Camb.*] 1860, pp. 281–4; another useful early listing was that by W. de Gray Birch, 'On

- Some MSS and Seals relating to Wales in the British Museum': *Arch. Camb.* 1889, pp. 273–92.
- 3 'Catalogue of the Contents of the Museum at the Monmouth Meeting, *Arch. Camb.* 1857, pp. 426. *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* XIV, pp. 56–8.
- 4 W. Bagnal-Oakeley, 'Monmouth', *Arch. Camb.* 1886, 26–7. The matrix is now National Museum of Wales [hereafter: NMW] Seal Die 27.
- 5 Letter of 23-07-1983. I am grateful also for correspondence regarding this seal from Mr A.L. Jones (6-03-1992) and Dr M. P. Siddons (13-03-1992).
- 6 National Library of Wales [hereafter: NLW] Badminton Deed [Group 1] 1565 (of 1452) and Milborne Deed 103 (fragment from 1447).
- 7 S. Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* (2nd edn., London, 1840) I, non-paginated. The National Museum holds a resin cast (59a), and several impressions (W245–8).
- 8 NMW, Accession File 38.422.
- 9 *Calendar of Papal Registers (Letters)* I, 43, 87, 109.
- 10 D. H. Williams, *Catalogue of Seals in the National Museum of Wales* I (Cardiff, 1993) 9, pp. 65–6, 102; II (1998) p. 54.
- 11 Two *bullae* of Honorius III (1216–27) and one of Alexander IV (1254–61). These form Seals B4, B5 and B9 in the National Museum.
- 12 National Museum Seal B11.
- 13 These *bullae* are now preserved in Newport Museum.
- 14 Alexander IV in 1261 issued a bull in favour of all the abbeys of the Order, exempting them from attendance at "synods and foreign assemblies" (NLW, References 173 and 179).
- 15 By Joanne Hall at National Grid Reference (hereafter: NGR) 3097 9275. NMW Portable Find 2010.94.1.
- 16 I am grateful to Mr David Harpin for giving me his thoughts on this matter, and communicating to me his collection of halves and quarters of papal *bullae*: e-mail message of 9 May 2012.
- 17 D. Knowles, *Saints and Scholars* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 187.
- 18 A comment made at the Seals Conference, Aberystwyth, April 2012. A signet ring bearing a merchant's mark was found in a grave at Llantwit Major, Glamorgan, and presented to the British Museum in 1852 by the Revd. John M. Traherne: O. M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Finger Rings in the British Museum* (London, 1912), p. 86 No. 566; J. Cherry and M. Redknapp, 'Medieval and Tudor Finger Rings', *Arch. Camb.* CXL (1991), p. 124; Williams (1993), p. 62 W. 447 illus.
- 19 G. C. Boon, 'The Seal-matrix of Abergwili College, Carms.', *Antiquaries Journal* XLVI (1966), pp. 104–07. The seal is now National Museum Die 1.

- 20 C. H. Talbot, *Letters to Cîteaux* (London, 1967), pp. 100–02, p. 176, p. 192, pp. 198–9: gatherings of Cistercian abbots regularly took place in London or Leicester in the 1480s and 1490s. In 1499 they were due to meet at Barnet, but because of plague in London removed to Leicester; E. K. Clark, ‘The Foundation of Kirkstall Abbey’, *Publications of the Thoresby Society* IV (Leeds, 1895), p. 207.
- 21 NMW Accession File 55.202. The silver matrix of this seal is known, and some have thought it to be a forgery. The Barry find is now NMW Seal F9.
- 22 They were the lead seal of William Malherbe (of c. 1270–1300) found in 1978, and a finger ring discovered in 1988 bearing perhaps the initials, *I. R.* These dies are now respectively NMW Seal Dies 34 and 33.
- 23 M. Redknap, and D. H. Williams, ‘A Seal Matrix from Aberavon Beach, Port Talbot’, *Morgannwg* XLIII (1999), p. 90. The find-spot was NGR: SS 738 897.
- 24 The matrix is now held in the Department of Medieval Antiquities at the British Museum; an impression in Cardiff is NMW C40.
- 25 The matrix is now NMW D.12.
- 26 M. Lodwick and D. H. Williams, ‘Gwent Seals XII’, *Monmouthshire Antiquary* XXVIII (2012), p. 118. The find spot was NGR: ST 367 952.
- 27 Robbers were a hazard of medieval travel. In 1304, the Cistercian abbot of Kirkstall by Leeds and his party set out to go to the General Chapter in France; he meant to stay en route first at Roche abbey in the south of Yorkshire, but writing home he said that “we were warned robbers were lying in wait in the woods near Roche, and so we evaded them.” Clark, ‘Foundation of Kirkstall Abbey’, p. 207.
- 28 The matrix is currently on loan from the British Museum (Dept of Medieval and Later Antiquities) to the National Museum of Wales where it is D.24. It is possible that this is not the original seal, but a silver electrotpe made at the close of the nineteenth century from the original matrix: Williams (1993), p. 25 D.24.
- 29 The legend may end: ...nleir. The seal is now in the ownership of Llanllŷr House.
- 30 The matrix is now preserved in the National Museum of Wales.
- 31 This seal also reposes in the National Museum.
- 32 *Calendar of Patent Rolls* 1283, 71. The matrix was brought in for identification to the Dyfed Archaeological Trust in 2003. At Cedweli Castle have been found a probable seal of Sir John Digby [NMW, Die 31] and a seal bearing the letters, b.o.f., surmounted by a crown [NMW, Die 44].
- 33 *Arch. Camb.* 1853, pp. 200–01; 1895, p. 11. This copy is now in the National Museum’s collections as D.32: Williams (2003), p. 26 D. 32
- 34 J. A. Bradney, Sir, *A History of Monmouthshire*, Vol. 3, Pt 2: *The Hundred of Usk* (London, 1923), reprinted by Merton Priory Press (1993), p. 218.
- 35 M. Lodwick and D. H. Williams, ‘Gwent Seals XII’, *Monmouthshire Antiquary* XXVIII (2012), p. 117. The find spot was NGR: ST 3498 0478.
- 36 NMW, D 28 and 29 respectively. Another seal found at Cardiff Castle bore the sacred initials: *i h c* [NMW, Die 26].
- 37 The find was made by the late Geoff Mein; the block is now in Newport Museum with a replica in the National Museum.

